



# MAX LEVEL NEWBIE

BOOK 01

*Yi Deung Byeol*

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

**Max Level Newbie**

(만렙 뉴비)

by

**Yi-Deung-Byeol**

(이등별)

# Synopsis

---

A world where all of the greatest in all dimensions have gathered.

Three out of five were the strongest in their world, and one of them was considered the strongest in history.

A crazy world where a wandering goblin would be above level 90.

Asgard, otherwise known as "Heaven above the heavens."

In a world where all of the monsters of the worlds meet, Vulcan's new adventure begins.

# Copyright © 2016 by Lisa Hayes

---

All rights reserved.

English Translation by Miracle @ [Light Novel Bastion](#)

Translation Edits by Yoshi @ [Light Novel Bastion](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

This is a free eBook. You are free to give it away (in unmodified form) to whomever you wish.

No part of this eBook may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the author.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

# Prologue

---

One who commands the power of the lightning god.

And also the power of hellfire. His blade struck at the speed of lightning, huge monsters fell, and the raging fire turned the undead to ashes.

One who reached the top at the age of 25.

The greatest fighter and fire mage.

The unchallenged, most powerful person in the world!

Vulcan, whose level reached 99, was known as the greatest genius in the history, and brought fear to all who opposed him.

But the level of the drunks in front of him are...

'289, 207, 267, 229, 245... 381... What is this, this stupid world!'

A world where all of the greatest in all dimensions have gathered. Three out of five were the strongest in their world, and one of them was considered the strongest in history.

A crazy world where a wandering goblin would be above level 90.

Asgard, otherwise known as "Heaven above the heavens."

In a world where all of the monsters of the worlds meet, Vulcan's new adventure begins.

# Chapter 1 - The Final Quest

---

The frozen wasteland at the northern edge of the Rubel continent had been ruled by a powerful Lich for thirty years.

The greatest wizard of the Magic empire and the most powerful frost mage in history, Frezole.

When he became an Elder Lich and decided to settle in the northern region, the people trembled in terror and despair.

Some requested their kings to eradicate him.

But the people's pleas were ignored by their kings.

Thousands of armored skeletons armed with weapons made of ice.

The seven Death Knights, surrounded by their darkly menacing aura.

And the Elder Lich who was once the greatest and most talented wizard, Frezole.

The kingdoms who only had standing armies of ten thousand were incomparable to their power.

Naturally, no humans traveled there. Not even the bravest of

adventurers or the most curious travelers would travel to those frozen lands.

It is a place that does not accept the living, for it is the land of the dead.

It had been a long time since a living human has visited.

[Main Quest - Eradicate the Elder Lich Frezole]

[Difficulty - S]

[Reward - Legendary ~ Mythical reward book 1]

Breach Frezole's lair located at northern region of the Rubel continent, kill his minions and slay their master.

\*Level requirement - Lv90(Recommended Lv97 and above)

"Hm... It's 93 percent now, so I should hit max level at the end right?"

The black haired man mumbled, pulled out his golden knight's sword and entered the snow covered forest.



\*\*\*

BANG, BANG!

Suddenly, large explosions cascaded in the silent forest of northern Rubel continent.

The freezing temperature and frost covered lands evaporated, and in its place were hellish, burning flames.

The skeletal warriors armed with frozen swords stronger than steel lay on the floor in pieces, alongside the Death Knights as their brooding souls began to dissipate through the fractures of their armor

And the man who was the cause of it all.

Facing him was the demonic Elder Lich, casting his spells.

"Ice Hand, Ice Hand, Ice Hand, Ice Wall, Ice Dragon."

The man's feet, which were smoldering with heat, froze instantly and a hand made of ice sprouted from the ground and grasped one of his legs.

Two more hands appeared behind him to hold his body still, as solid walls of ice appeared to trap him within.

The only way out was to go up.

But an ice dragon that appeared out of nowhere, was already staring down at the man trapped inside.

He quickly looked around the area but the frozen hail surrounding the dragon made it seem like escaping unscathed would be difficult.

KRAAAAAAAAAAK!

As if unable to wait any longer, the ice dragon roared and dove straight down towards the ground.

The man gave up on the thought of escaping through the top and gathered the fiery power in his body.

"Spirit Form."

BAAAAANG!

In an instant, the man transformed into a fire spirit and melted his way through the ice wall. The Ice Dragon slammed into the ground and returned to natural ice.

As the man raised his guard for a counter attack in the frosty mist, he could see hundreds of cone shaped missiles of ice in front of him.

Each of them flew past at dangerous speeds, and getting hit by more than one would endanger his life.

'Quadruple casting and instant cast as well... shouldn't this be SS, not S?'

Even as he was thinking such a useless thought, he evaded the missiles with swift, clean movements.

The Elder Lich Frezole was getting pushed back, as the man dodged his ice magic with superior agility and even had time to counterattack by releasing lightning from his blade.

'How could a mere human... have such strength. He doesn't even seem to be in his thirties...'

Frezoles emotion turned from surprise to fear.

In the two hundred years that he had lived, including his life spent as a human, the number of people who had been able to threaten his life could only be counted on one hand.

Ninety nine percent of his enemies lost their lives to the ice missiles, and the remaining one percent could be dealt with the Ice Dragon, Ice Hand combination.

There had been no exception.

But this man was different.

No matter what attack, what spells he used, he could not change the calm look on the man's face.

Even facing the endless wave of spells, the man was so relaxed and the Lich began to feel he was the one being cornered.

The Lich admitted.

Frezole was feeling fear.

'But... I won't accept defeat so easily.'

Frezole began channeling all of his remaining dark mana in his vessel and began casting.

It was his first time controlling ice missiles and casting two high rank spells, but he had no other option.

He could feel his body beginning to break from using his mana beyond his limit, but the spell finished before it broke apart.

His trump card with everything on the line.

The skeleton dragon appeared behind the man.

A blue flame burned in Frezole's eye socket.

'If even this doesn't work... Kuku, I'll accept it, and pass on to eternal sleep.'

The skeleton dragon charged at the man who was swinging his golden sword.

But the man turned his body naturally as if he was expecting it.

As he was looking at the skull dragon without any tension, Frezole's second spell activated just in front of him.

BAAAAAAAANG!

The bone explosion spell sent the fragments of the skeleton dragon's body flying towards the man.

\*\*\*

[Level up!]

[Congratulations! You have achieved level 99.]

[Limited access - Asgard's Seal has been released.]

[Main quest - Eradicate the Elder Lich Frezole has been completed!]

[Please choose your reward.]

"Kuuaaah! I'm done!"

At the centre of the smoldering land, Vulcan, armed with a golden knight's sword and red leather armor shouted out loud.

Normally he wouldn't hesitate to ignore everything other than the quest reward, or review his battle, but not this time.

'Level 99... max level... I've done all the quests and did everything I can. I knew the Seal would release if I hit level 99!'

Vulcan smiled with a sense of accomplishment.

He was teleported into an unknown world called the Rubel continent when he was twenty, and suffered through all kinds of hardship.

Instead of a normal university life, he had been forced to hold a sword and deal with constant messages and voices in his head as if he had gone insane.

The 'guide system' which you would only see in a VR game, forced quests upon him which seemed like it was leading him to certain death. Along the way, he even experienced his first life-threatening situation and his first murder...

His lonely, five-year-long adventure flashed through his mind like a slideshow.

In a way the time had gone by in the blink of an eye, but the fact that he could no longer remember his parents or his sister's face, nor his memories of his home was proof that it was definitely not a short amount of time.

He had endured it all for such a long time.

No matter how hard the adventure was, he hadn't given up and took his steps one by one. Now only one final step remained.

Right now Vulcan, looked like a hero from the legends.

His entire body was hardened with muscle and the confidence and pressure coming from his body was emanated to his surroundings.

There was no remaining trace of a newbie who once trembled in terror while fighting a single goblin or orc.

Equipped with legendary and mythical armaments on his entire body, the max level hero awaited his ending.

'It's over. After this last quest... I can go back. Back to the peaceful days, back home.'

Vulcan sheathed his blade of pure lightning and looked at his quest window.

There was no need to search through it. All of the completed quests had been removed and the ones on the list were [Main Quest - Eradicate the Elder Lich Frezole] for the reward and [The Final Quest - Enter Asgard] which had just been unsealed.

After this was completed, everything would go back to its original place.

Vulcan closed all of the notification messages in his view and left the quest reward and skill windows open. He focused on the skill list especially.

[Passive skill list]

\*Combat Mastery - S

\*Weapon Mastery - S

\*Defense Mastery - S



\*Evasion Mastery - A -> S(Rank up)

...

Fire mastery A -> S(Rank up)

# Lightning Mastery S

# Cold Mastery B

## Necromancy Mastery C

Vulcan's lips turned into a smile when he saw that his 'Evasion Mastery' had improved, which had never happened despite all of the previous grindings he did to raise it.

Dodging all of Frezole's modified ice missiles one by one must have had a large effect on it. He almost allowed Frezole an opportunity due to length of the battle but the reward was worth it.

'Instant cast of Skull Dragon and Bone Explosion combination... He wasn't a level 99 boss for nothing.'

There were other improvements, Fire Mastery had improved from A to S.

'Perhaps it's because I destroyed the Cold Magic with Fire Magic. Hm.'

This was also a great result.

With the difficulty of the last quest in mystery, the S-rank Fire Mastery would prove useful.

After looking through all of his masteries on the chart, he looked at his quest rewards with greed.

It was the first time he had done so, but he had wanted to save the best for last this time, which was difficult.

'Now... What will come out from it.'

The last 2 S-difficulty quest rewards hadn't disappointed him.

The trials he went through at level 80 to receive the mythical weapon, the 'Pure Lightning Blade' and the skill 'Indestructible' that he received at level 95 for killing the orc great chieftain had increased his stats drastically.

His whole mind was filled with excitement.

'To be honest I don't need any changes to my equipment. A skill... a Fire or Lightning skill. One with a lot of utility... Please!'

Vulcan looked at his reward.

[Mythical Skill - The Inferno Abyss]

[Level Requirement : 99Lv]

Turns the area around the caster into scorched earth. Enemies within the AoE take damage over time, and the caster's Fire skill damage increases by 20%. When in flame spirit

transformation, the spirit may travel to any place within the scorched earth. 60 second duration.

Vulcan smiled.

\*\*\*

'This is perfect. Perfect condition, perfect equipment, potions fully stacked. There's nothing more I can do.'

At the western end of the Rubel continent, there was a cave on an uninhabited island.

Vulcan stood at its entrance, outfitted with his legendary equipment.

Within the cave was a darkness deeper than an abyss.

A normal man would quake with fear just looking into it, afraid of the unknown threats that could be lurking within.

However, Vulcan's face seemed as if he had made a decision.

Truth be told, Vulcan had long contemplated about going through with the quest 'Enter Asgard'.

The term 'Final Quest' suggested that the difficulty would be far beyond what he had faced before, and the fact that no details about the quest had been shown made it even more difficult to make a decision.

But he decided not to think about it anymore.

He had done everything he could.

In order to be prepared for everything not only had he leveled up, but he had also invested a lot of time into basic combat mastery and gathered skills that synergized with each other.

His items could not get any better, either. He also prided himself on his vast combat experience.

Vulcan was the undisputed, most powerful man in the world.

Waiting any further would not be caution, but hesitation and cowardice.

Vulcan scratched his head, his hair had been cut short like a mercenary's. Some of his hair dropped along with his unrest.

"This is the end, bloody Rubel continent."

The footsteps that echoed in the cave went farther into the distance, and darkness swallowed him whole. And then, as if

nothing had happened, the cave erased its own existence from the world.

He was unsure how many days he had been walking.

More than ten times it seemed he had been going up and down the harsh terrain. It made Vulcan feel uneasy that not a single monster had appeared, let alone an exit.

Too many times had he been sharpening his mind which became dull with despair and agony. Stray thoughts began to poison him.

‘Looks like there aren’t any mobs here.’

‘No... What if it was their plan to make me sloppy and ambush me in the dark?’

‘No no... if that as their plan, they would’ve done that a long a go. I should just take it easy.’

‘It’s been over a week since I’ve been walking, where’s the exit?’

‘Wish I could see something else but these rocks...’

‘What if I need to walk like this for an eternity...’

‘Don’t tell me this is all there is to it.’



‘Would I be able to... go back home?’

‘My family... I miss them...’

‘.....’

With time, restlessness and stray thoughts swept away like a leaf in a tide.

A month has passed walking in silence. Darkness and gloom overtook Vulcan without him realizing.

Vision became blurred and the auditory system began to fail. Then the ability to smell, and later, to touch.

All five senses were extinguished and darkness overcame like plague. He could not feel anything. The sense of walking was already long gone.

Vulcan kept moving like a machine programmed to walk. His dull senses were just enough to pick up the sounds coming from the SYSTEM transceiver.

[You have cleared all NORMAL difficulty quests]

[You are now entering the Asgard territory – Difficulty: HELL]

[Act 1. Beloong city]

Darkness was lifted and the dazzling light awoke every cell in Vulcan's body.

## Chapter 2 - The Strongest Goblin Of All Time

---

The vast grassland was the first thing he saw after coming to his senses. The reflection from grass of the meadow revitalized Vulcan who had been in the dark for so long. But he also had some questions unanswered.

‘I thought there would be a boss monster or an ancient dungeon at the end of all this...’

But in front of him, was only a quiet, peaceful landscape. Something Vulcan had not been expecting.

With a bit of a thought, Vulcan opened up his quest window, but there were no other quests including [The final quest – enter Asgard].

It appeared to him that he must have finished the quest without realizing, or he was already on the Asgard continent itself.

‘No way. Couldn’t they have given somewhat of a reward after clearing a quest named as flashy as the final quest?’

Vulcan decided to wait a bit longer just in case he got a late message from his transceiver. But all he got in return was the feeling of void and a cool breeze coming from the end of the meadow.

Vulcan could not wait any longer and decided to start moving.

His eyes traced on a dirt road which crossed the grassland from where he was sitting. The road was wide enough for two horse carriages to travel at once.

‘It’s obvious that I should follow this road’

Often inconvenient quests like this would appear.

Vulcan thought of using his skills to transport himself faster, but decided not to. It was better to conserve his stamina although he will arrive much later.

Vulcan leisurely took his first steps along the dirt road.

“FUCK!!!”

Two hours of walking had passed until Vulcan came across a sign and shouted.

‘200km till Beloong city’

Although he knew that there was a city somewhere he knows he could go, Vulcan felt uneasy. The letters on the sign plate were something he had never seen before.

Despite the fact the transceiver could translate most of the foreign languages, it had its limits of only being able to comprehend the exact meaning behind it. It did not give Vulcan

the ability learn the language entirely.

‘Well this language is definitely not from Earth, nor is it from Rubel. HA! I guess this means I’m not back to Earth yet. Damn it.’

‘What if I came back to Earth and this is in fact somewhere on Earth, not Rubel?’ – Thought Vulcan whilst walking along the dirt road in hopes of coming back home.

He soon gave up on the hopes of returning to Earth. But it was bitter to face the reality.

“Ha....”

Vulcan sighed.

There was not a single thing that was easy; from the beginning when he first arrived, and until now.

Vulcan shook away the melancholy. On the bright side, he had found a way to a new city. That itself was a huge advance.

If he used the lightning spirit form, it would not even take thirty minutes to get to the Beloong city. He had no reason to save his stamina.

It had already been two hours since he had last seen a monster.

“Spirit form.”

As he chanted the word, Vulcans flesh and bones dissolved into the air and thunderbolts took its place instead. Soon after, a completed spirit form shaped like Vulcan had appeared.

“I should get going then.”

Excitement ran through his body in the thoughts of speeding through the meadow.

It was then; a small monster appeared at the corner of Vulcan’s eye.

A monster appearing to be an orc, or a goblin was confidently approaching him with a weapon in hand.

“Man, I was so tensed up and alert since I came here. And the first thing I see are some trash mobs? You’ve got to be kidding me.”

Vulcan smirked and flashed towards the monster.

What had appeared to be a small dot, gradually became larger as he approached it.

As soon as the monster was within range, Vulcan threw a Lightning Spear and continued speeding his way to Beloong city

without slowing down.

Then suddenly, the monster that was just hit by the Lightning Spear blocked his path.

Vulcan felt confused.

‘He didn’t die after that? A mere trash mob?’

Vulcan carefully examined the monster.

“Krrr... Krrrrak.”

It was a goblin.

“....”

It has got to be a goblin. It was a lot bigger than an ordinary goblin. However judging by the appearances – large ears, hooked nose, green skin; it was definitely a goblin.

Vulcan stood lost in words.

Average level of goblins are 10.

There are often goblins that reach level 25 through special mutation or being of a boss class. But even for them, it was

impossible to withstand the Lightning Spear from a level 99.

The monster did not appear to have taken any damages. Instead, it was radiating a murderous intent.

‘What the fuck is that.’

“Maybe it’s not a goblin?” thought Vulcan as he inspected through his transceiver.

[Goblin Mukushu the Wanderer]

[90 Lv]

“ ... ”

The second strongest foe ever battled.

The most powerful and ferocious monster following the 97 level boss monster: The Elder Lich Frezol.

The monster that was showing a superior, vicious aura was not an ancient mythril golem, nor a high rank demon, nor an enormous monster.



It was just... a single goblin.

To be frank, Vulcan had let down his guard.

There have been times when monsters were either easy or harder to defeat in relation to its level.

However, it was only due to a minor difference in skills, not because the monster was showing a wrong level.

Goblins were an easy prey even for Vulcan at level 5, who had relatively good combat skills and intelligence.

Upon reaching level 30, they were treated as if they were mere pebbles on the ground because they did not provide much experience.

Therefore, it was hard to think that a mere 'pebble' was radiating a killer intent, swinging his falchion faster than a high-class Death Knight.

There was nothing unnatural about being surprised.

KINNNGG!! GAAAKINGGGGG!!!

The Goblin Mukushu was swinging his falchion faster than an ordinary eye can catch. His stance and swinging style was that of an amateur; however the raw strength and speed was a master

class. It seemed he had a strong will to crush anything that comes across his path.

An aura that only comes from an ancient high general of a civilization which kept its place for thousands of years... Vulcan felt uneasy.

‘A sword... won’t be enough.’

Vulcan acknowledged the enemy.

The monster in front of his eyes was a level 90 top-ranked monster, not an ordinary goblin. There was no embarrassment in bringing out everything he had.

Vulcan launched towards Mukushu with his sword. Weapons clashed and with recoil, Vulcan pushed himself away from the goblin to make some distance.

“Hellfire. Hellfire.”

Two head sized meteors shrouded in inferno were molded behind Goblin Mukushu.

Vulcan started with controlling one Hellfire to attack the enemy. The fiery meteor flung on top of the goblin and began to strike down. The second meteor floating mid-air, was looking for an opportunity of a second strike, if the goblin dodges the first Hellfire.

‘As soon as you dodge the first Hellfire, I will destroy you with my second Hellfire along with the Thunder God's Strike!’

It would be near impossible to avoid the second Hellfire and Thunder God's Strike after dodging the first Hellfire falling at a high velocity. It would at least injure the creature, which will make the next step easier.

Vulcan firmly grasped his sword in the prediction that he had won the fight.

However, Goblin Mukushu did not maneuver as he had predicted.

“KRRRRRP!”

“BAANNGGG!!”

With savagery, Mukushu slammed the Hellfire with scorpion kick with his right leg.

Hellfire began to fly towards Vulcans chest with greater acceleration due to Mukushus pure strength.

“...!”

Vulcan quickly snapped out of astonishment and quickly pulled

his Pure Lightning Blade and flung his sword to redirect the Hellfire away.

Immediately, two hatches flung across the plain and towards the ankle and the chest. Vulcan jumped high and evaded both.

Vulcan's and Mukushu's eyes met in mid air. Vulcan felt nervous when he began to wonder if the goblin was showing a hint of a self-satisfied smirk. Suddenly, a 10 meter sword clocked in crimson chi surged from Mukushus elbow and began to strike down.

“SPIRIT FORM!!”

He was able to dodge the sword with the thunder spirit form. Shock wave and thunder echoed to every corner of the field.

The grassland was carved where the crimson chi had run through. Two things came into the eyes; the unreal change in scenery which appeared to have been cut like butter, and the Goblin Mukushu which was bouncing on spot, pleased with his warm up.

Smirk.

Although a different species, Vulcan was fully able to apprehend Mukushus barbarous grin. His whole body was telling him to snap out of it and start moving.

Vulcan decided to test his new skill on the Goblin Mukushu.

“... The Inferno Abyss.”

A chunk of mana withdrew seconds after enchantment.

It was a large amount of mana for a skill that only lasts for a single minute. Spell power so great that you cannot cast it twice in a row without taking mana potions.

‘Although I can’t use it because the cooldown is two hours.’

But there was no way he needed to cast the skill twice.

Let alone a minute, just ten seconds was enough.

“KIIRRRRIII? KIRRRRIIHK!!”

Flame poured out from Vulcans feet and began to incinerate everything within 500 meters in diameter.

There was not a single place that was not on fire. It was an immense heatwave that cannot be fully blocked by chi alone.

Goblin Mukushus cry echoed, expressing the unbearable pain.

“KKKIII!!!!!!!!!!!! KIRIK!!! KUUU.... KKKKRRIIII!!!!”

Realising he cannot defend himself under the spell zone, he attempted to run out of the circle with vigilance towards Vulcan. Only 500 meters. With a few seconds of sprinting, he could get out.

But Vulcan would not let that happen.

“EXPLOSION!”

Detonation thundered and ripped across the battlefield like a volcanic eruption.

Mukushu attempted to dodge the Explosion, but his left shoulder was already burnt to the very bones and the cartilage. It would not be able to use his left arm with a blow like this.

“Can’t compare it to some other fire magic right? It’s a skill that concentrates all combustive elements around me. And my Inferno Abyss was a perfect medium for it.”

“KKRAWWWWWR!!”

Mukushu dashed towards Vulcan in pain and fury.

It could not escape due to Explosion spell, nor stay in place as The Inferno Abyss will burn him.

As soon as it realized that the only way to escape was to kill the caster, it charged without hesitation. The falchion in its right hand

emitted a menacing aura.

However, as ready as Vulcan was, it did not intimidate him.

“Spirit form.”

Vulcan's body scattered into the air and quickly forged back into a flame spirit. Mukushu was swinging his falchion with great momentum until Vulcan materialized behind the giant goblin. He was holding the Pure Lightning Blade in his right hand. It was sparkling in gold under the sunlight.

Terror filled Mukushu's eyes as he rotated his neck to glance at Vulcan with his weapon in hand, ready to swing. A merciless voice echoed into the distance.

“Punishment of the thunder god.”

The goblin was cleaved clean right down in the middle from the crown to the groin with flawless swordsmanship.

“Phew.”

Tsss... Tsssss....

Amber spread across the field due to the aftereffects of the Inferno Abyss.

It had the appearance of a fierce battle between two armies numbering in hundreds.

This was a view that no one would have thought came from a one-on-one battle.

“That was the toughest goblin I’ve ever faced.”

Vulcan put his Pure Lightning Blade into its sheath and reflected on the battle.

There were too many mistakes that he had made; underestimating the opponent even though it was a level 90, panicking when Mukushu counterattacked, and also using the Inferno Abyss recklessly.

In fact, using the Inferno Abyss whimsically was not an ideal move. He should have saved that skill and the mana required as a last resort.

Since he was in an unknown place in which level 90 monsters were roaming on a common field, he should have saved everything he could conserve in preparation for what was coming next.

However, using the Inferno Abyss for the first time so proficiently satisfied Vulcan.

Unbelievable damage was produced through consecutive attacks of the Inferno Abyss and Explosion. Furthermore, using Spirit



Form and teleporting behind Mukushu felt incredible.

It would be a piece of cake to fight five of those ugly monsters all at once.

When his thoughts reached that stage, Vulcan felt discontented.

“I can’t believe I’m overjoyed because I can battle five goblins.”

Vulcan was dumbfounded.

However, the truth was that this goblin was strong. Probably the strongest goblin of all time.

Vulcan approached the corpse of Goblin Mukushu, which was burnt to the core and had collapsed into halves.

It was a level 90-it better drop a good item.

Vulcan picked up a weapon radiating a crimson light from the corpse, and checked its stats.

[ Legendary Weapon – Falchion of the Amplifier ]

[ Level restriction: Lv 90 ]

Attack: +104

Stamina: 50/50

Blade Type Skill Points: +2

Berserker Type Enforcement Skill: +1

\*Falchion used by Goblin Mukushu the Wandering Warrior. Allows the user to use Berserk mode to temporarily obtain higher skill points.

“...!”

Vulcan was speechless in his astonishment.

The stats were much higher than what he had expected.

It had similar attack and stamina stats as the Pure Lightning Blade, but it had two additional enchantments on it. The enforcement skill was a staggering +2 even.

It was also a blade type weapon. Blade type weapons had better accessibility than other held-hand weapons as it was so easy to use.

A superb weapon.

Vulcan felt gutted.

He was not a warrior class who was fueled by physical strength. Instead, he was a thunder/destructive fire mage type who relied on mana, and that meant he could not use the weapon to its full potential.

Vulcan put the Falchion of the Amplifier into his inventory with the hopes of using it in the future.

Although he cannot use it at the moment to its full potential, there may be a time when it may come to be useful to him.

“Eagle of the lightning, mana armor.”

Vulcan used his detection and protection skills to enter his defensive mode.

There were too many unknown hazards to foolishly plow on towards Belong city using his spirit form. At least, he should stay safe until he was able to use the Inferno Abyss again.

A quest that expired without any notice from the SYSTEM transceiver, a new map, and a level 90 goblin unknown to him even after 5 years of travelling.

Everything was a mystery, but Vulcan decided to think about it

later.

‘I’ll learn more when I arrive at the city.’

Vulcan took his first step towards the dirt road heading to Beloong city.

## Chapter 3 - Lvl 122 Merchant

---

Despite Vulcan's concerns, he did not encounter any monsters on the way to his destination. He walked for 2 hours in tension.

As soon as the cooldown period of the Inferno Abyss dropped to zero, he used his spirit form and was able to reach Beloong city before sunset.

Beloong city did not appear to be like any other place he had seen. It was a fortified city surrounded by a high rampart with a control tower placed in between that seemed to be able to hold an army of soldiers. Behind the walls was a moat, which led to the sizable city.

Vulcan headed towards the entrance.

Perhaps the city was not as populated as he thought. Vulcan was the only one entering the city.

Only one sentry was guarding the gate. He was dozing off while leaning against the wall, suggesting that the city was rarely visited.

The sentry looked up and examined Vulcan, then quickly went back to taking his afternoon nap.

Whoever trained this sentry must have done a terrible job.

However, the armor he was wearing appeared pretty decent. Maybe the city was strong enough to let a wanderer in without caution.

‘Works fine with me.’

Sometimes, sentries would provoke a quarrel. Vulcan did not mind entering the city like this.

“Wow!”

Vulcan dazed in admiration.

Multi-story buildings filled the area like never seen before in Capital Empire.

Streets were fitted perfectly together like flawless bricks. Unlike other cities, litter and pollution were nowhere to be found.

Not a single common beggar was seen. Even the looks of the citizens walking in the street were stunning. The city seemed to be wealthy.

Vulcan explored the city and came across a display on a large bulletin board.

After close examination, it turned out to be the city direction board. The shopping district, the innkeeper, sundries, and main

buildings were all labeled.

‘I guess I won’t need to ask anybody where things are.’

Thanking the existence of the board, Vulcan decided to head towards the shopping district. Ideally, you would first go to the inn to obtain more information for your next step. But Vulcan felt a strong urge to see what was on the market after seeing the wealth of the residents.

\*\*\*

The shopping district was completely different from what Vulcan had imagined.

He was expecting to see large vibrant buildings full of people. Instead, all there was was a two-story house called ‘The Sundries.’

The rest of the district was full of merchants that sold on the streets.

Vulcan felt disappointed to see the market looking like a second-hand shop in the countryside, but he walked into the crowd of auctioneers to at least have a look around.

He stopped at a display stand where he randomly chose, and began to examine his items.

The middle-aged merchant had a small scar on his left cheek. He was wearing a black robe which appeared to be too thick and hot for the midday sun.

A dagger, a couple of rings and necklaces were scattered on the mat, and it seemed they were not of good quality.

“May I have look?”

“Sure. It’s not like they’re gonna wear off by just lookin’. Take yer time. Ask any questions if ya wanna.”

The man spoke in a different language never heard of before on the Rubel continent. But the transceiver’s automated translator made it easy to communicate.

Vulcan checked the stats of the ordinary-looking dagger that seemed to have been carelessly hurled onto the mat.

[ Normal Weapon – Assassination Dagger ]

[ Level Restriction: Lv 80 ]

Attack: +81

Stamina: 24/24



Attack increased by 20% if backstabbed.

Able to be automatically retrieved when thrown.

\*An ordinary dagger. May be used to attack a defenseless enemy. Could be used as a substitute for a dart.

“ ... ”

‘What the... Damn. I must be seeing things.’

Vulcan checked the stats again.

The unchanged enchantments and stats of the Assassination Dagger greeted him.

Lost for words, Vulcan put down the dagger and grabbed a ring. It was just a common black ring without any patterns or carvings.

[ Artisan Ornament – Apprentice Ring ]

[ Level restriction: Lv 85 ]

Mana: +10

Spell Power: +9

Dark Magic Type Efficiency: +5%

\*A ring produced in masses for students working hard to become a dark mage. Created by a well-known wizard. Popular amongst beginners.

“This...!”

“What. Ya wanna buy it?”

“N... No. I would like to see the other items.”

Vulcan examined the rest of the accessories.

Play-with-Fire Ring, level restriction 72, normal weapon.

Goblin Molar Ring, level restriction 77, normal weapon.

Lightning-Struck Necklace, level restriction 80, artisan ornament.

They were rare items for experienced and high-level people.

Vulcan did not understand the situation.

Normally, one would be required to slay either a boss monster or a special spawn on an open field to obtain one high-level item. It was beyond Vulcan's imagination that he would come across four of them at a place that appeared to be a sundries stand.

‘What’s with the names and the grades!!’

It was unnatural for rare items of that grade to be named with such carelessness. There was no way anyone would flippantly name something that exceptional ‘Play-with-Fire Ring.’

It was as if a legendary sword forged by a master craftsman and handed down through generations being named ‘A Very Good Long Sword’.

Vulcan talked to the merchant.

“How did you obtain these items?”

Vulcan's courteous question appeared to confuse the middle-aged man.

“Of course through monsta huntin’. Ya really don’t know?”

“Oh, is that so...”

‘Monster hunting my ass...’

Vulcan became speechless to see the merchant treat the items as if they were just typical, everyday items. However, those items were only obtainable through weeks of grinding where Vulcan was from.

It had been a very strange day.

Encountering a goblin never seen nor heard of before, and then finding high-end items on a mere sundries stand.

The items were spread across the mat like common starter items, and there was nothing extraordinary about the grades either.

Plus they were apparently simply obtained through monster hunting.

Vulcan studied the merchant.

All he saw was an honest merchant that spoke of something that players of at least level 90 would say.

“Hey wait. Maybe he’s a hidden master?”

‘No, it can’t be,’ thought Vulcan as he continued to wonder about the identity of the man in black robes.

But everything that happened today was bizarre. The goblin, the

items.

Everything.

Perhaps he could add one more to the list.

‘It’s not like I’m going to wear it out.’

Vulcan reached for his right pocket and held out his transceiver, using the Scan Ability on the merchant.

[ Third-rate Swordsman Jake ]

[ Lv 122 ]

‘... a three digit level?’

BOOOOOM!!!!

While Vulcan was tilting his head dubiously in confusion, a loud noise was heard from the adjacent stand.

Vulcan looked around involuntarily. Two men were raising their voices in an argument.

A bald man holding an iron mace over his shoulder and a man dressed in black shamanist gear fit for a martial arts novel were glaring at each other.

“I bought this first. Fuck off when you have the chance.”

“What are you talking about? You haven’t even paid yet. Hey mister merchant, I’ll pay you more. Trade with me instead.”

“Well would you look at this idiot. Why are you getting in my way? Are all ‘[Murim](#)’ small-fry as bitchy as you are?”

“I expected nothing from a muscle-brain ‘Powel’. Rough with the language as always. Hey mister. You want more money right? Let’s get this over and done with.”

TLN: Murim\* a term used for people who are in the martial arts world.

The merchant had no interest in the argument. As soon as he received the cash from the black shamanist, he handed over his wooden necklace, took his item stand and disappeared into the crowd.

A chunky vein popped out of baldy’s temple as he watched the merchant disappear.

Without warning, he swung his iron mace at the man in black robe.

CHNNNGGGG!!!

Before anyone's eyes could follow, a [willow leaf saber](#) blocked the iron mace.

TLN: Willow leaf saber\* This is a type of Chinese curved sword that is similar to a scimitar called [Liu Ye Dao](#).

The man in black robes jumped back and created some distance with the recoil. Using his left hand, he draped the wooden necklace around his neck, and then withdrew another willow leaf saber from its sheath.

“Try that again if you want to die, Mr. Skinhead.”

Without the roaring from a moment before, the bald man held up his iron mace.

Blue aura enveloped not only the iron mace, but the man's body like blue fire.

“Bring it on. Trash talkin’ ‘Murim’ shit.”

The man in black robes replied with a smirk on his face.

“Now you’ve asked for it. Better get your ass prepared. Come.”

Then he rocketed high into the skies.

A smooth arc trailed behind the man as he left the city over the wall, and the bald man ground his teeth before jumping too.

BOOOM!!!!

Everyone watched the man with the iron mace flying out, creating a large depression on the district alley road, as he began chasing with great explosion.

Soon after, they returned to their businesses as if nothing had happened.

The merchants organized their shelves, and looked around to see what they could sell. They did not seem to be bothered by what they had just seen.

The district went back to its peaceful state. Auctioning noises could be heard from here and there. It was just another day at the market.

But Vulcan could not do that.

As the bald man enveloped himself in blue flames, Vulcan instinctively scanned his abilities, then doing the same with the man in black robes.

He was dumbstruck.



Two windows with the abilities of the two men opened before Vulcan's very eyes.

[ First-Class Fighter Fulvike ]

[ Lv 368 ]

[ First-Class Swordsman Jung Yeop, Lee ]

[ Lv 371 ]

‘... Level 368!? 371!? Is there something wrong with the SYSTEM transceiver?’

Vulcan stood speechless.

It was an unbelievable number.

They were numbers which he had never imagined, let alone though existed. He rubbed his eyes in shock. What had he just seen?

‘Is this a dream?’ thought Vulcan, as a deep crease formed between his eyebrows.

Having hunted down every monster type in the Rubel Continent, he had poured blood, sweat and tears into his training, day in and day out. This was all done for the possibility of reaching level 99.

He had thought that there was none with levels above his, as he had done as much as humanly possible.

There was no one who even came near Vulcan's level. The strongest human on Rubel was level 94: the Duke of Willyf, the 'Sword of the Empire'. Yet, even he was incomparable to Vulcan, not to mention anyone below him.

Undeads of the Elder Lich Frezole were slain in hopes to find monsters above level 100, however none were found.

It was because of this, that Vulcan had accepted he was stuck at a level cap.

It was impossible for people stronger than him to exist, as his power was already monstrous.

He had 'Stamina' that had reached the 260 points, and 'Magic Power' that was even higher. This combination made the impossible possible. A casual punch shattered a two-story stone building, and an easily conjurable fire magic eradicated a group of boss monsters.

His lowest stat was his 'Hit Points' (HP), numbering around 100

points. His HP meant that a direct blow from an ogre's mace would only tickle him. .

‘If I got more anymore stronger... Would I perhaps become a God?’

Those were the thoughts he once had.

He now realized they were stupid and naive.

Vulcan turned his eyes back onto Fulvike and Jung Yeop Lee's ability screens, which were still open from five minutes ago.

Emptiness and shame replaced the confidence he had built up through years of training. As the shame surged over, the self-confidence washed away like a sandcastle on a beach.

‘A God eh? My level wasn't even anywhere near a street merchant.’

Vulcan dropped his head in embarrassment.

His face flushed. It felt like showing a stranger your childhood diary, which detailed your dreams of becoming a superhero.

A middle aged merchant, Jake, approached Vulcan and asked:

“Son, I was wonderin’. Is this your first time here?”

Vulcan looked up in surprise and saw a gentle-looking merchant.

“... How did you know?”

“You can usually tell a newbie from the rest with just a glance. Well, in your case, it was hard to tell. I found that rather strange. ”

His two sapphire eyes seemed to stare into Vulcan’s innermost being.. Jake appeared to have distinguished something, and continued to talk.

“By any chance, are you a player? You know... the one that uses a transceiver and ability scans?”

Vulcan’s face filled with astonishment.

Jake gave Vulcan a confident look, as Vulcan gaped in astonishment. Vulcan had just heard something he thought he would never hear in this world.

“Of course you are. Haha, I haven’t seen a player in a long long time. Nice to meet you.”

Vulcan’s head was bombarded with questions. He had finally met someone who knew something about the players.

It had been 5 years since he had entered this world, but he had never seen someone with similar abilities.

When he first arrived, he asked around and looked into every corner of Rubel, hoping to find other people like him.

He tried joining many guilds, the most notable being the Adventurer's Guild, the Thieves' guild, and the Empire's Faculty of Information and Services , however there was nothing.

Loneliness was Vulcan's only companion, as he was the only human player in the world. After that, Vulcan only focused on completing quests.

He gave up his hopes of seeing another human being, and continued to move forward without any expectations.

But now, in front of him, was someone who knew who he was.

Vulcan spoke to the man in excitement.

“How did you know? Are there others like me? Could it be Mister Jake... That you are one of those.. Err... Players? What is this pl-”

“Bloody hell, son. Don't you think it's better to ask one question at a time? I won't be able to answer if you don't.

As Jake tried to calm Vulcan, he became slightly irritated.

Unfortunately for Vulcan, Jake ignored his desperate and uncertain questions, and reached his hand into the air. He then pulled out a bottle of liquor, which appeared to be a whisky.

Vulcan's eyes sparkled again in surprise.

‘Inventory...’

It seemed Jake did not care whether Vulcan was shocked or not. After he took a sip of his liquor, he began to talk after taking a sip of his liquor.

“Well... It's a long story. If I explained how I found out you were a Player, we'd be here all day. You saw me using my inventory, right? I'm a Player, too. We call people like ourselves ‘Players’. The man in the black robe from earlier is a ‘Murim’. The muscle brain he was fighting is a ‘Powel’. I'm not going to tell you what this place is. If I did, it would really take forever to explain. Also, it's not something I should say.

“Um, what? Err... Hey...”

“Stop. If I explained everything, I'd have to close my shop for today. Trust me, kid, I don't want to do that. Not today. Mhm.”

Vulcan looked at Jake, hoping to get more answers, but it appeared like Jake had already made his mind up. He refused to answer any more questions

Vulcan looked down with a sullen look.

He wanted to abduct him even with force and question him all day.

‘But he’s stronger than me.... Fuck...’

One needs strength to demand something.

As a lower level Player, there was nothing Vulcan could do.

He sighed and dropped head, looking like the most unfortunate person in the world.

His only concern now was whether to give up, or beg like a dog.

Then he heard Jake’s voice.

“Hey.”

“...?”

“Man. It looks like you’ve misunderstood me. I’m not a bad person who’ll bully a newbie I don’t even know.” said Jake, scratching his head.

“What? Newbie? What are you...?”

“Stop. I know you have a lot of questions, but just listen.”

Jake pointed at an alleyway with his index finger, as he defended himself against Vulcan’s endless questions.

“If you turn left after that building over there, you’ll see another building with pictures of meat and wine on it. That’s the only pub in Beloong city. They’ll probably tell you they haven’t opened yet, but if you tell them it’s your first time here, they’ll invite you in. They’ll greet you and answer all the questions you have. It’s been ages since I last saw a Player. I’d love to talk more, but I have some important business to attend. We’ll discuss about it later, okay?”

Jake averted his eyes, and started looking over the crowd, as if he had nothing else to say. He looked at his stand and began to organize it.

“Thank you.”

Vulcan idled around for a moment, before nodding. He headed towards the alleyway Jake had pointed out. It would be rude to bombard a busy man with so many questions.

His steps felt heavy as Vulcan walked, fatigue evident in his eyes. Soon after, he heard a word of farewell.

“Be safe now. We’ll catch up over a few drinks next time, Vulcan!”



‘That geezer must have checked me on his ability scanner!’

Contrary to earlier, his steps felt lighter as he turned around and waved back at the busy merchant.

Vulcan felt strange as he had never been scanned before. It was always him using the ability scanner on other people.

Knowing that other people could scan him made him feel uneasy. He felt naked. His thoughts grew increasingly muddled, as Jake disappeared out of his view.

‘God, I have no idea what’s going on.’

Nothing was being solved.

After arriving in this world, everything seemed to confuse Vulcan: whether it be the unbelievable levels of the inhabitants of the city, or the existence of a Player, whom he had been seeking for five years. The more he tried to comprehend the situation, the more difficult it became for him to understand.

“AW, FUCK!”

Vulcan gave up on thinking.

There was nothing he could do with the little knowledge he had

at this point. It would only hurt his head.

He spat on the street, and left behind all other miscellaneous thoughts.

‘Let’s just go to the pub and not worry about things for now.’

Vulcan sped up, and began to head towards the pub.

# Chapter 4 - Mister Filder The Kind (1)

---

The pub was a three-story wooden building, and it was larger than what Vulcan had expected. It looked like they were closed, as he didn't hear any trace of boisterous drunken men.

‘So, they will tell me everything I want to know here, eh?’

Vulcan nervously took a deep breath, and thrust the door to enter.

However the door did not open, let alone flinch.

‘What?’

Thinking it was a pulling door, Vulcan searched for the handles, but none were to be found.

Vulcan shoved against the door again. It was still unmovable, akin to a thousand tonne boulder.

‘What in the world?’

Judging by the naked eye, the door appeared to be made from wood. Yet, obviously it was something else.

Either that, or there was magic casted onto it.

After countless tries of throwing everything he had at the door, whether it be magic or physical strength, it finally opened. He felt exhausted already.

Like all stores before opening hours, the place was free and empty.

There were tens of wooden tables neatly lined up in rows and columns. The rectangular pillar in the middle of the hall accentuated this. The pillar, giving off an emerald light, seemed to evoke a luxurious air.

Dazzled by the emerald pillar, Vulcan stood in silence. He heard voices coming from the corner of the building.

He turned around and saw two men sitting around a table in the corner of the pub.

“So, you’re saying I need to follow your orders?”

“No. There’s no need for that. I’m just asking for you to practice basic skills, under our protection, for two years.”

“Protection? Practice basic skills? Are you saying that it’s too dangerous here for me? Me, the former head of the ‘[Nokrim](#)’, and the ruler of the city? You’re currently talking to the one and only Dokgo Hoo. Are you saying I, in all my supreme glory, need to work under you, a mere peasant!? Are you saying I need to hide

here and practice basic skills because it's too dangerous for me!?"

TLN: The original name of 'Nokrim' was actually described as 'Nokrimbaekpalchae', but I have shortened it for reasons

The man in the tiger coat stood up. He was so tall his head nearly touched the ceiling.. He fiercely smacked the wooden table in anger.

BANG!

The brute strength, that was capable of slaying a house-sized goblin, smacked down on the table..

Yet, the table did not break.

In fact, there was not a scratch on it. Due to the varnish, it appeared shinier than ever.

The face of Dokgo Hoo, the middle-aged man in the tiger coat, flushed red.

‘He must have done that thinking he could break it.’

Vulcan glanced at the so called ‘ruler of the city’, Dokgo Hoo.

Vulcan gazed at the two-meter tall, muscular man, who was emitting a fierce aura. Seeing that man blush in embarrassment, made him incredibly uncomfortable.

## Chapter 5 - Mister Filder The Kind (2)

---

“Haha, I’m sorry my lack of explanation hurt your feelings Mr. Dokgo Hoo. Please calm down and hear me out.”

A slim man who seemed to be the owner tried with all his effort to calm the angered Dokgo Hoo.

But Dokgo Hoo showed no signs of being pacified.

“Explanation, my ass! You spoke such bullshit because you disdain me! I admit that you are a little bit stronger than me, but crushing your weak skull is nothing if I train for three years!”

“Haha, well, I don’t know....”

Looking up at the angry Dokgo Hoo, the owner lifted a cup of tea on the table. He gently shook his head and sipped the tea.

It was as if he was in a trouble because of a childish kid talking full of nonsense.

Just when Dokgo Hoo was about to show signs of another outburst the owner looked straight into his eyes and spoke. The tone was strict, not like before.

“Dokgo Hoo, sir, you are wrong.”

He raised his finger and pointed his sleeve.

“Even if you train alone, for someone like you, you will never ever be able to cut my sleeve.”

“What?! Are you mocking me, Dokgo Hoo, the finest swordsman of Nokrim?!”

A murderous intent enough to scare away fierce beasts burst out of Dokgo Hoo’s body. He gave a look sharp enough to pierce the owner’s face,

but in contrast, the owner was calm as a sea. A very soothing voice came out of his mouth.

“I am NOT mocking you.”

He didn’t avoid Dokgo Hoo’s murderous look.

“I am just telling the truth.”

“You!!!!!!”

A lion’s roar exploded out from Dokgo Hoo’s mouth.

His self-taught breathing technique, Tiger King’s Arts, cycled the twelve veins and the eight extra meridians and brought out a fierce

aura.

From Dokgo Hoo's body, an enormous aura of a tiger that even beasts in the gigantic Snow Mountains feared filled the inside of the pub.

The aura gradually spread out and turned into a tornado as if it was going to destroy everything inside the pub.

As a matter of fact, Dokgo Hoo did try to destroy the entire place.

It was a demonstration of force to prove the size of his fury and the fact that he was the mighty one and the only man who owned all 108 mountains of the Cho empire.

Even for Vulcan who just entered the pub, the pressure was intense. Vulcan grinned and looked around the at the pub's condition. He got worried that perhaps it might damage the place,

but nothing happened.

“.....”

Everything in the pub kept its place without a single move and of course the owner was holding his cup as if nothing happened.

“Fuck..... This is not it.....”



Dokgo Hoo looked at the owner with awkwardness. He was still emitting the aura but there was no momentum from just a few seconds ago.

Realizing that something was wrong, he gradually suppressed the aura. He was sweating.

The pub owner spoke with a respectful? tone but somewhat heavy.

“The finest swordsman, yes it is great.”

“.....”

“Of course I believe the facts that you ruled all 108 mountains and you were undefeatable in the previous world. Let me remind you again, I didn’t disdain you.”

Dokgo Hoo kept his mouth shut. He was already exhausted and what the pub owner was saying wasn’t so bad to hear.

But what came out of the pub owner’s mouth wasn’t what Dokgo Hoo expected.

“However, there are people with strengths such as yours all over this world.”

“How dare y...”

“Go out to the street. There are hundreds of people wandering around who are stronger than you. Not only the finest swordsman of Nokrim, there are fancy names such as Sword Master, Greatest Demon of all time, Lord of Heaven Beyond Heavens. But there are so many of them out there. That is the truth.”

His dissuasion continued.

“All those great people went through the training. Why? Because they realized their lack of strength and wasn’t ashamed to put the effort in.”

Dokgo Hoo was lost for words. From his shaking, it looked like he lost his confidence but the owner didn’t stop and continued talking, only now with a soft tone.

“Mr. DokGo, let me say this again. I’ll do my best to make sure you adapt much quicker than now. You DO have talents. You can reach the summit with much a faster and safer method than regular....”

“Arggh..... Quiet!”

SLAM!!!

Slamming the table again, Dokgo Hoo screamed.

“Just shut up already! I, Dokgo Hoo, the head of the confederation of the 108 Bandit Tribes, has never bowed my head to anyone for sixty years of my life! Three years, no, five years! In five years, my weapon demon blade of the black blood! Will take your head! Until then, keep your neck clean!”

Dokgo Hoo spoke with agitation, turned around. He tried to push the exit door with his right foot.

Sadly, the door didn't open.

With only a small gap barely enough for a skinny person to go through, the door closed shut again.

Pub owner's voice was heard from the back.

“Because there are many people like you, I made the door much rigid and heavy.”

“You...!”

Dokgo Hoo put much more power in his both hands, turning his already-red face much redder and left the pub.

Vulcan didn't know whether to laugh or cry in this situation.

‘Man, my head has gone funky in a single day.’

What Dokgo Hoo said wasn't wrong.

Looking at his status through the system he truly deserved to have that much pride in himself.

Saying 'you are still lacking the strength to be by yourself. Be my apprentice, I'll take care of you,' to someone like Dokgo Hoo was nothing else but an insult.

[Dokgo Hoo, thief trainee, former Finest swordsmen of Nokrim]

[92Lv]

His level was enough to aim for the elite ten and if time allowed, the champion.

Excluding Vulcan himself, he could have been the top three in Rubel Continent.

'His accent is very cheesy and he's a bit idiotic but...'

That was just his personality. It had nothing to do with how strong he is..

Still.....

‘He doesn’t seem strong at all.’

No matter how hard Vulcan tried to be impressed by him, it didn’t work.

Until yesterday, no, until he arrived at Beloong city, Vulcan wasn’t like this.

If he encountered Dokgo Hoo at Rubel continent he would have been filled with tension for meeting a worthy rival. He would have been amicable, trying not to make Dokgo Hoo his enemy and perhaps planning combat tactics in case things didn’t work out between them.

But in Beloong city, he didn’t feel anything.

It was like watching a tantrum from a kid or a drunk man on a rampage.

In a city where monsters with levels of 122, 368 and 371 wander around, level 92 was just too... low.

It actually was just a newbie.

‘I must be out of my mind.’

Maybe being in this nonsensical city has made me go crazy.

Vulcan made a bitter smile.

“We are not open yet.... Perhaps this is your first time in Beloong city?”

Piercing Vulcan’s deep thoughts, the owner’s voice was heard. Vulcan politely greeted the kind and smiling pub owner.

He felt like he should be much politer although he wasn’t that rude in the first place.

Vulcan looked back on the owner’s stats that he just checked.

[Pub owner, Filder]

[??Lv]

\*Because of the huge level gap, unable to obtain exact stats.

If there is a bastard being arrogant even after looking at such a notification, he or she is just insane.

“Yes, hello. Call me Vulcan, or Jae Hyuk Kim, whichever you want. I came here because I was told anyone who’s new to Beloong city should visit this place.”

Vulcan's polite introduction, Filder's eye widened a bit.

'I've never seen a person so polite when first met.'

People with black hair and brown skin are mostly from a world known as 'Murim' and they are known for being sturdy.

"Hello, My name is Filder, the owner of the only pub in Beloong city. Please do take a seat."

Filder introduced Vulcan to the table Dokgo Hoo was sitting until just now.

As he sat down and made a hand gesture, two cups appeared and filled the table.

"A tea with a deep taste and smell."

"I see, thank you."

Vulcan had no hobby of tasting a tea but he thanked and sipped the tea. The tea indeed had a good smell but had no taste in it.

"I love the scent."

"Glad you like it, haha."

‘Actually, it’s not good.’

Filder also sipped his tea with a gentle smile and spoke.

“I know you have a lot of questions, but let me ask you some first.”

Vulcan nodded and the questions began.

“Are you perhaps from the Murim?”

“Huh? Pardon?”

Filder added an extra explanation because of Vulcan’s reaction.

“I was asking if you are from the place where most people with black hair and brown skin live.”

‘Does this mean...?’

Vulcan realized that this place, Beloong city wasn’t from the world where Rubel continent exists; it was from a whole different world.

‘I have no idea what’s going on, but it seems like I landed in another world.’



Barely holding his sigh, Vulcan spoke.

“No, where I am from, there were mostly people with golden, or brown hair and white skin.”

“Hmm, could you tell me the name of the region you are from?”

“It’s called Rubel continent.”

It was the first time hearing about such place for Filder. Of course, it wasn’t odd. If this person is ‘that type’ of person, obviously he wouldn’t know. There were not many people after all.

Filder probably guessed where Vulcan was from but threw a last question just to make things sure.

“Is there a God named ‘Powell’ in Rubel continent?”

“Nope, never heard of such God.”

“Then you must be the ‘player’.”

Filder’s calm voice struck Vulcan’s ears hard.

Under the table, Vulcan’s fists were getting tighter.

## Chapter 6 - Mister Filder The Kind (3)

---

“Player..... What does it exactly mean?”

“You should know better than I, Mr. Vulcan. A person who can gather various useful information using [the system ability](#), the one that gets stronger not through training or enlightenment but through experiences from battling monsters, is that not?”

TLN\*: We originally called it the system transceiver or transceiver, we will now translate it as system. (Game system)

“..... That’s right. By chance, are there other players in Beloong city?”

“Yes, including you, Mr. Vulcan, there are about 500 players residing in Beloong city.”

“If that’s the case, allow me meet them. Please.”

Vulcan said with an eager expression on face.

For whatever reason he came to this world that was completely different from Earth or how he ended up with a video game character like body, there was no one that could explain it to him.

Vulcan spent all his effort and abilities in hopes of returning to his original world, thinking it may happen if he followed demands of the system that seems only interested in his growth.

However, it was no use.

He did everything he could in Rubel continent, yet he couldn't find any clues for returning to his home world. The baseless belief in thinking that everything will be resolved once he reaches the max level has now become a busted bubble.

‘There are other players besides me!’

Just before giving up on everything, he stumbled upon newly found hope.

Vulcan did not want to miss out on this opportunity.

“I know well of your feeling of uneasiness, Mr. Vulcan. Probably, unlike Mr. Dokgo Hoo, this is probably your second time to visiting a new world. Ah, as you guessed, this place is completely different from Rubel continent that you were in.”

Filder's tone of voice suggested the complete awareness of Vulcan's predicament.

Vulcan waited quietly for Filder to continue.

“I know most of things that you might be curious about, but besides those, I have so much more information that I must tell you. It is not like we are short on time, so please listen to what I

have to say first and then ask your questions.”

Vulcan nodded. He was still anxious, but it is not like he couldn't wait when Filder offered to tell him everything.

Also, the truth is, he was scared of Filder.

Filder may appear to be a skinny dainty, but after all, he is a master with a level that was incalculable.

‘No matter how curious and how desperate, I must not act boastful and stay put.’

Vulcan set aside for a while his pride as Rubel continent's strongest mage swordsman at level 99.

His sight locked on to Filder like an honor student tuning to a respected teacher.

\*\*\*

In the world there are many different dimensions that exists, and in these dimensions, many different civilizations developed, writing unique histories of their own.

Isolated from each other by a tremendous force called the Dimensional Wall. Unaware of each other's existence, tens of thousands of worlds maintain their individuality.

However, these different dimensions have one thing in common, and that is the existence of the gifted ones who are viewed with envy and jealousy by ordinary people.

It is obvious that individual abilities of people should vary, but the degree of the difference with these beings far exceeded beyond what common sense could explain.

What took someone to achieve in a week could took another person three years, someone that can master sword techniques from a knight that trained ten years just by taking a glance at it.

Someone that is able to master skills by the age of 30 where ordinary people couldn't reach in one hundred years. Prodigy by youth, a god-like being 30 years later.

These beings, with their god like abilities, probably rose to the top in their dimensions, living like majestic kings without ever having to have to lower themselves in front of anyone even once.

That is, until they enter the land where the strongest of all dimensions gather, Asgard.

\*\*\*

“.....To speak of the standards for a player, those with level 90 and above have the right to enter Asgard.”

Filder continued after wetting his throat with a tilt of a drink.

“You can’t just come to Asgard by simply going over level 90. Even after rising as the strongest in their own world, it seems those who are satisfied with their lives do not get summoned to this place. Those lacking ambition or who didn’t push themselves to progress further are not able to cross over to Asgard. This is not a confirmed fact but a theory, however it is a conclusion drawn from several thousand people, so it is not completely baseless either.”

“When you say ambition, what kind are you talking about?”

“I’m speaking of the kind that could not be realized in one’s own world.”

“Hm.....”

Vulcan made a face indicating he wants more explanation.

“The most common kind of ambition is ‘I want to become stronger’. I don’t know the world you came from, Mr. Vulcan, but most of martial artists or mages likely have strived to reach a higher level by any means necessary.”

He was right.

In fact, the elder lich Frezole was obsessed with mage training that he did so even at the cost of giving up his wealth and title, and

when he reached the end of his natural life span, he resorted to becoming a lich to extend his life.

“Even a prodigy in their own world would face certain limits. That could be with regards to ones ability or life span. Asgard can be considered the land of opportunity where one can achieve the ambition that could not be fulfilled due to such limits. This place allows you to maintain your peak strength at your prime and eternal life. God-like beings that are worthy of being your rival, powerful monsters you have never experienced, incredible high quality sword and potions, opportunities to discover unthinkable magic spells and mental re-enforcement techniques are all over the place. Asgard can be called the place that has everything one needs to become stronger.”

Filder continued after taking a sip of tea.

“The aforementioned reasons are the usual kinds, but there are others who come to this land to achieve different goals. Mr. Vulcan, it looks like you fall to that category.”

Vulcan fixed up his body posture. After a long prologue, the main part was about to come.

“I take it that this means you know what I want.”

“Going back to your own world.”

“.....”

That was exactly right. Vulcan went on to ask.

“What makes you think that?”

“Because you are a player, Mr. Vulcan.”

Filder continued while Vulcan made a jumbled up face.

“There are people that cross over to Asgard even if they don’t have ambitions to reach a higher level; in the case of having goals that could not be achieved from their own world. Finding medicine to cure a family member, seeking a holy sword of legend to prevent the invasion of demons, priests wising God’s blessing on their own worlds, and so on..... The first example is quite common, but for cases like the holy sword, that’s only for specific kind of people.

“.....”

“These people are known as ‘[braver](#)’, those who are born to protect their worlds. When the ‘power of a braver’ is not enough to protect their world, they would often challenge Asgard as a last resort method. More often than not, priests also come to Asgard to bring God’s blessing to their own world. There is one other group of people that also focuses on one objective.”

TLN\*: Brave warrior

By this time, even Vulcan could tell whom the group of people



that Filder spoke of.

“Yes, they are the ones called players: For reason unknown, those that fell to different dimensions, the strong ones amongst them that attained the rights to enter Asgard by reaching the level 99, the ones that still have the resolve to return to their home world. Mr. Vulcan, the moment I realized you are a player, I knew what made you so anxious, and why you wanted to meet other players.”

“That is.....”

“It is not necessary to meet other players. I know the way to return to one’s home world. This is a method that is viable to not just players but also bravers, priests, or any other visitors of Asgard with different kind of wishes.”

Vulcan, with fires/flames on his eyes, stared at Filder who stared back at him calmly. Everyone was the same. All players that came to Beloong city stared at Filder with eyes full of passionate resolve that indicated they would do anything to go back to their homeworlds. With full of confidence, they headed for hunting grounds and worked hard to adjust to Asgard.

However, there wasn’t any player that achieved one’s wish. About half [were not of this world](#) and the other half struggled in endless despair until finally resorting to permanently settling in Beloong city.

TLN\*: This could either mean they were literally not of this world or as in In Korea, “not of this world” means dead.

‘I wish you could obtain what you want.’

Filder opened his mouth.

“Asgard is divided into three area based on its level of danger. We call them Act 1, Act 2 and Act3. Beloong city that you are in right now is the main sector of Act 1, area with the lowest level of danger.”

“.....!”

“And each Act has a monster that could be considered the main boss. The monster that rules over all monsters in Beloong city is Sarantis, an incredibly strong one that treats kids of devils like snacks. Mr. Vulcan, if you hunt down Sarantis, the main boss of Act 1..... you can clear Act 1 and realize one wish.”

[Quest generated!]

[Main quest – Defeat Act 1 boss monster, Sarantis]

[Difficulty – B (Asgard standard)]

[Reward – One wish]

Main boss monster that rules over Asgard’s Beloong city field.  
Defeat Sarantis single-handedly



# Chapter 7 - Beginning Of The Training (1)

---

Vulcan sat and stared mindlessly at the streams of water gushing out of the water fountain.

Beloong city's central plaza was amassed with people preparing for a hunt besides Vulcan.

“We are looking for two skilled ones for the western gate side orc colony hunt! We only take Second-rate or higher! People from Powel are also welcomed!.”

“We are looking for a martial artist that will go kick some Lamb-head bastards' asses. Murim only!”

“We are looking for a First-rate, close-combat mage that can continuously hunt mid-level boss orcs! Also looking for a [Third-rate](#) martial artist as a backup!”

TLN:In U.S, we don't use the term second-rate/third-rate, etc. very often so this sounds strange to see in a sentence, but in Korea, “third-rate” is used often as derogatory term to rate things or someone's skill. The author is literally using these to brand skill levels in this fictional universe.

It was funny to watch tough looking grown-up men yelling as if they were trying to form an RPG game party, but Vulcan's face was having a hard time easing up.

“231, 339, 317, 289.....”

Those were the levels of the people gathered in the plaza.

It was hard to find anyone with a level below 200, and occasionally there were some with a level far above 400. Even those equipped with shoddy armor or ones that looked ill had levels easily exceeding 100, hence it could be assumed there wasn't anyone lower than Vulcan.

‘Ah right, there was that mister with the tiger coat.’

Still, that didn't make Vulcan feel any better.

A muscular man approached Vulcan who was sitting mindlessly. The man started talking to him with a bit of an arrogant tone.

“Have you thought about joining a hunting party that hunts mid-level boss orcs? By the looks of it, you are not a Second-rate yet. It will be a more profitable business for you to do our chores instead of hunting alone.”

Vulcan answered with an expressionless face.

“It's only been three days since I got here.”

The man looked displeased as he turned away.

Vulcan could hear him complaining

"What in the world is a baby chick doing sitting tight in the plaza..."

It wasn't infuriating to hear. As he is now, even Vulcan knew his place at the moment was like that.

Vulcan picked up the small booklet and stood up from the spot. It was time to go meet the pub owner.

\*\*\*

"Are you certain of your decision?"

"Yes, I can start right away even today."

"You've made a wise decision. It is difficult to accept based on your previous achievements and accomplishments from your past dimension, but it will help you a lot to getting adjusted in Asgard."

The [pub owner Filder](#) said with a big smile on his face, indicating he was glad to hear it from bottom of his heart.

TLN:In conversations, Vulcan calls him in honorary term, so Mr. Filder is used. In descriptions, author just uses the name, so that's why I don't use "Mr." in descriptions.

Three days ago, Filder suggested to Vulcan about doing ‘basic training’ to survive in Asgard, or as the people from Murim would call it, ‘Heaven of Heavens.’

The idea was that Filder and a few others have the know-hows on how to settle in Asgard, hence Vulcan is set to gain so much more instead of working hard by himself.

Vulcan, who rarely remembers ever receiving favors without strings attached, asked like this:

“Why are you taking on tasks that are only bothersome and has no reward?”

“Those that arrived at Asgard for the first time are no different from a newborn baby. It is only right to be generous towards someone who is weaker, so please you do not need to feel like a being in debt.”

Filder was someone that would spit out cruel words with a smile on his face, just as Vulcan felt for a bit during the conversation with the man in the tiger coat. Filder said there was no need to respond right away and handed Vulcan a small booklet.

“Mr. Vulcan, this is data that will help you understand the environment you are in now. Please take a look.”

The booklet had basic information about Asgard and summaries of the nearby monsters’ types, threat levels, etc. It was quite

useful.

To make up for lacking information, Vulcan scanned people while staying in heavily populated places like the trade district and plaza. It was to assess the average strength of the Beloong city residents.

And then Vulcan came to a conclusion.

At his current skill level, he could never survive in Asgard.

‘With my current skill level..... I can’t even be a Third-rate.’

According to the small booklet, the standard for Third-rate treatment began at level 100, so level 99 was below the qualification.

Since it was going to be hard facing a monster from even the easiest hunting ground in this place, there was only one way left—accepting Filder’s proposal.

“Actually I was a little worried. I make the same proposal to everyone visiting the Beloong city, but most of them get angry saying they cannot stand the patronizing tone. I can understand that... but things did not end well for most of those people.”

Filder continued after making a bitter face.



“It is a little late today, so the training will begin starting tomorrow. The 2nd and 3rd floor have many empty rooms, so please rest there and we can go to the training grounds tomorrow morning. Ah, it is ok; you can stay in this place from now on. There are plenty of rooms after all.”

“Yes, then please excuse me for being in your debt a little.”

Vulcan immediately laid on the bed without even taking off his equipment. He could feel the softness of the bed. Vulcan thought about what Filder said a moment ago.

‘It is common for people to refuse?’

Filder said most of the people coming to Asgard, or Heaven of Heavens, were displeased with his proposal. People that were used to being hailed as iron-blooded warlord in an empire, or those that were called by cool nicknames such as king of heavenly sword, master fist of Murim, etc., those that lived their lives always receiving preferential treatment by countless people.

‘Is it because of pride?’

It looked like they must have been thinking that being an underling to someone was unacceptable.

However, to Vulcan, it was irrelevant.

‘A high level user said he would give a newbie information and is

[boosting](#) me to become stronger!’

TLN\*: Author simply used ‘Jjull’ for this. ‘Jjull’ is an online game slang meaning an arrangement where a very high level user helps a low level user do well in game (helps a person slay monsters to level up, explain how to do things in game, etc.). TLDR; Author means getting ‘power leveled’.

It was an opportunity too good to refuse because of petty pride. Instead, it was a fortune sent from heaven that one should be thankful for.

Vulcan thought to himself that he must firmly put his heart into this and start over. Follow the instructions and train steadily, and when he is up to about level 500, then he can go back to his home world, so try hard.

“..... but when will I get to fucking level 500.”

Vulcan couldn’t fall asleep easily due to all the worries about the future.

\*\*\*

The cold air was a specialty of an early morning, but it brought about rather refreshing feelings instead of chilly. Filder and Vulcan walked side by side and shared stories about Asgard.

“Beloong city is frequently visited by people that worships a god of war called ‘Powel’ and black-haired people that call their world

‘Murim.’ The next most frequent visitors are the players.”

“Ah, so then that’s why.....,”

“Yes. Mr. Vulcan, you did not know about Powel, and you were not wearing clothes specific to people from Murim, so I guessed you must be a player.”

In middle of listening, Vulcan asked out of the blue.

“By the way, are there other starter cities aside from Beloong city?”

Filder responded with an expression on his face as if why such an obvious thing is being asked.

“Of course. Beloong city has no more than twenty thousand residents. People claiming to be the united empire’s number one knight or its heavenly horseman from over ten thousand dimensions are flooding out, so there couldn’t be just twenty thousand.”

“Then, how many more cities like this.....”

“There are nine more of similar size.”

“No way.....”

Two hundred thousand of fiends with an average level of 200 that could annihilate a continent while smiling.

It gave Vulcan the creeps.

“Haha, I was surprised when I heard it for the first time. It even made me think about things like ‘I thought I was the best, but I am nothing after all.’ Asgard is full of fiend-like bastards.”

Vulcan stared at Filder with a cringe.

Hearing Filder, someone who is estimated to be over level 500, saying such rubbish made a feeling of defeat rush into Vulcan like an ocean wave.

‘Just what is he saying in front of an ultra low-level.’

Fiend-of-fiend, fiend-captain-like man saying such rubbish spoiled Vulcan’s mood somehow.

While talking about various things about Beloong city, they arrived at the front of the east gate.

They went past the guard, who was being as lazy as always, and exited the castle gate. There, a giant shadow greeted the two. Broad shouldered and lush tiger leather clothing, carrying a sword of immense size.

It was Dokgo Hoo, the ruler of Nokrim.

‘What, why is he here?’

## Chapter 8 - Beginning Of The Training (2)

---

While looking rather gruff, Dokgo Hoo approached the group. He glanced at Vulcan up and down and then started walking along beside Filder.

“Who is this man?”

“That’s Sir Dokgo Hoo to you! You small fry!”

“You saw him in the pub before? This is Mr. Dokgo Hoo from Murim, the finest swordman of the Nokrim. He will be training with us from today and on.”

‘But he got pissed off and left the pub saying that he cannot take such a treatment.’

Vulcan looked at Dokgo Hoo, who was now walking proudly with them as if there was nothing about it that bothered him. Noticing Vulcan’s eyes, Dokgo Hoo asked.

“There is an old saying that you will get rusty if you don’t keep up with training, so always strive to learn and improve. There is also a saying that a man trying to learn should not be concerning oneself about embarrassment. I’m just following the ancient wisdoms and concentrating on learning to sharpen and smooth my blade.”

Ah, is that so.

What an incredibly thick skin he has.

On the other hand, it made Vulcan curious. Dokgo Hoo was not the kind of man that would just lower himself and come along like this.

‘Did something happen.’

Vulcan’s question was answered by Filder.

- It appears Mr. Dokgo Hoo had an altercation with someone while going around Beloong City recently. The opponent took into consideration that Mr. Dokgo Hoo is a newcomer to the Beloong city and did not hurt him badly..... but it seems the incident severely damaged his pride. He said he would do anything to have his vengeance against that man.

Filder’s explanation echoed inside Vulcan’s head, completely clearing all of his curiosities.

Vulcan glanced at Dokgo Hoo up and down just like how he did to Vulcan earlier.

“What?”

“It’s nothing.”

Dokgo Hoo glared at Vulcan. Vulcan turned his eyes away like there was nothing wrong.

‘Still, I am better than that guy.’

Vulcan found something to feel better about.

\*\*\*

The place that Vulcan’s group arrived at was a forest not far from the east gate. The place was packed with lively trees thanks to the bountiful sunlight.

“This place is where you all will be training.”

Filder said with a smile as usual. Dokgo Hoo inquired immediately.

“Hey, there is nothing here but trees. What was the point of coming here? We could have trained in front of the city.”

‘What a tone for someone who just made a big speech about learning.’

Filder did not mind Dokgo Hoo’s tone at all. Filder explained as he pulled his slightly wavy brown hair.



“It is as Mr. Dokgo Hoo said. Since there is nothing here but trees, we will be going through basic training with trees.”

“What? With these trees? What could we possibly do with these trees?”

“Making firewood, of course. Isn’t the story common in the world you came from Mr. Dokgo Hoo? New apprentices climbing a mountain, drawing water, and working hard at cutting firewood, and so on. I know it to be a fairly common story.....”

Filder tilted his head, suggesting his surprise.

Certainly, it was a common story. Even Vulcan remembered seeing a martial art flick featuring a similar story.

‘However, isn’t that a really basic training?’

Vulcan himself was level 99, and even Dokgo Hoo, although he had been waltzing around the town and getting his ass handed to him, was at level 92.

It was unthinkable to believe there is anything to gain from cutting firewood.

As if trying to advocate what was on Vulcan’s mind, Dokgo Hoo angrily stepped forward and started pointing fingers at Filder.

Vulcan thought to himself.

‘Is that guy suffering from an anger control disability?’

“What is this, a child’s play? Cut firewood! I’d rather practice sword dance in an empty space. Are you trying to make a fool out of me?”

“Of course not. I am not someone with such a terrible personality.”

“Then, what!”

“Hold on..... Hmm. Do you see that one in the front? That one tree sticking out by itself, that one. If you cut down that tree in one swing, we can end this training and move on to the next level.”

Filder pointed at the tree with a smile.

Amongst all the trees full of life and vitality, the tree that Filder was pointing at was disturbingly ill. Even its girth was substantially lacking in comparison to others.

Dokgo Hoo cringed.

As if trying to say he misheard, he asked again.

“That one?”

“Yes, that one.”

“Ha, fine.”

Dokgo Hoo spat on the ground. His expression looked absolutely rotten as if he was just insulted.

‘Aren’t you patronizing me, as if I’m less than a dog.’

Dokgo Hoo thought about saying something, but changed his mind. Thinking that he should end this child’s play, he said loud and clear.

“Don’t go back on your words!”

## WHOOONG

His sword made a swift noise in the air as he took a stance.

A massive sword that even a troll would drop in one hit was being held in Dokgo Hoo’s right hand. It looked rather primitive but sturdy, and a strong aura emanating from the blue light surrounding the sword exuded its violent existence.

‘It looks strong for the level.’

Vulcan thought about the goblin that he faced when he first arrived in Asgard.

Although it was smaller, quality wise the craftsmanship was far superior. Murderous intent, the kind that that would strike viciously at the first sign of a gap in the defense, could be felt from Dokgo Hoo.

Dokgo Hoo grinned and walked toward the tree. Cracking his neck, he took an offensive stance.

“Hmm, this is nothing..... Hah!”

His sword was swung with force.

It was a strike with an exhilarating speed that even trained martial artists would have had a hard time following.

TUNG!

The sword forcefully bounced off from the tree.

Dokgo Hoo's upper body was also shaken up, but he rapidly balanced himself and saved himself from the embarrassment of losing grip of the sword.

‘What the hell!’

“This~ Da~mn bastard tree!”

A sense of panic could be felt in midst of all the swearing.

Vulcan too was panicking just the same.

Dokgo Hoo rose to the ranks of those with absolute power by his sword technique alone. Yet, here was a tree that withstood its power without a scratch. Beyond panic, it was sending a sense of terror down Vulcan’s spine.

Filder said to Dokgo Hoo, who now seemed to have lost his mind.

“Then can we start the training now?”

“No! I was careless! If I try again, I can cut it!”

“You said no going back on our word, did you not?”

Filder paid the words right back at Dokgo Hoo.

Grinding his teeth, Dokgo Hoo said with his teeth still locked.

“I can... I can do it.....”

“Hmm..... If you say so..... I can give you one more chance. No going back on your word this time.”

“Of course! Who do you think I am! I am Dokgo Hoo, the finest swordsman of Nokrim!”

After yelling at Filder, Dokgo Hoo took to his stance again.

Taking a deep breath and concentrating his energy, he looked extremely angry from the back, but the way he suppressed his emotion and stared at the tree in front of him looked quite convincing.

Like a focused martial art trainee trying to come up with a new technique, he looked disciplined and amazing.

Vulcan and Filder held their breaths and watched him.

“.....Hup.”

This suffocating silence.

Breaking that tranquility, Dokgo Hoo's sword swung.

Cutting diagonally from the top, it was one amazing strike as if the sword and Dokgo Hoo became one!

‘Heart and blade ..... no, heart and sword becoming one!’

Vulcan’s eyes opened wide with anticipation.

**GWAK**

However, the end result was a failure.

Unlike the first try, which only left a barely visible scratch and bounced, the sword penetrated almost halfway through, but it was far from calling it a complete cut-through.

Filder said toward Dokgo Hoo.

“Now you won’t say any other words?”

“.....Kurgh.”

Dokgo Hoo looked really down unlike how he was moments ago.

Taking a knee on the ground, and with his head tilted down, Dokgo Hoo looked pathetic as if he suddenly aged ten years. His wrinkles on his forehead looked deeper, and his shoulders were sagging like an old man at the retirement age.

‘.....He lost to a tree so.’

It was understandable how Dokgo Hoo must be feeling.

However, Vulcan knew what the tree's level was, so he thought it wasn't something to feel so defeated.

There is nothing to feel embarrassed about not being able to cut down an opponent in one strike who has a higher level than oneself.

[Unhealthy Max Level Tree]

[117Lv]

It was a sight that reminded Vulcan again what kind of world Asgard really is.

Vulcan sighed inside.

The tree that Dokgo Hoo tried to cut was the one with the lowest level amongst all the trees in the area and even had 'Unhealthy' as part of its title.

Somehow, Vulcan felt the uneasy sense of being subjected to disgrace.



Filder asked Vulcan, who was looking at the tree and Dokgo Hoo with a disturbed face.

“Mr. Vulcan, are you going to challenge the tree as well?”

“Um.....”

Honestly, he did not have the confidence.

Vulcan thought his strengths were the concentrated attack utilizing various skills and the pro-active use of the ‘SYSTEM’ to be flexible and rapidly adapt in situations.

He was at a disadvantage on a test of the strength of a single blow; hence, it made him hesitate.

With all sorts of buff skills on and one-shot-kill, one-to-one combat skill ‘Thunder God's Strike’ perhaps .....

‘It is still not enough.’

Even with all that, it didn’t seem enough.

Perhaps it may get to three-fourths of the way in, or it might come just short of all the way through, and that made him thinking about tasting defeat. Even so.....

‘If I just walk away like this, that will hurt my pride.’

Also, Thunder God’s Strike wasn’t the only skill he had.

“I have one question.”

“Yes, please ask.”

“Is striking the tree with a magic instead of a sword allowed? Also, up to what still constitutes a single strike?”

“Hmm..... First, using methods other than a sword is fine. We are here to train, not to gather firewood. As for the second question, I don’t quite understand.”

“For instance..... Am I allowed to use only one skill, or before attacking... am I allowed to activate skills that will bring about multiple synergy effects.”

“No way! There is no such a thing! Even I did one sword strike! Don’t you try to use dirty tricks!”

Dokgo Hoo yelled in protest as soon as Vulcan finished talking.

Dokgo Hoo must have thought that if Vulcan succeeds right after he failed, it would have made him look like a fool.

Vulcan ignored Dokgo Hoo's words. After all, it was Filder that made the decisions.

Still with face full of smiles, Filder closed his eyes for a moment and looked at Vulcan.

“Ok. Let's try it that way!”

“What! Isn't that cheating? What in the world.....”

“But.”

Filder interrupted Dokgo Hoo, and using his index finger, Filder pointed at a different tree.

Even at a glance, it was a tree with girth obviously thicker than the last one.

[Max Level Tree]

[130Lv]

“Since I am giving you a lot of allowances, may I include a handicap? If you choose that tree as the target of your challenge, I will accept the terms you described earlier.”

“.....I accept the challenge.”

Vulcan made a big stretch and approached the target.

The humungous tree greeted him, boasting its heavy existence.

The level of difficulty had increased substantially, but Vulcan did not mind. It would not look good to back out because of it, and besides, he felt the desire to just take on the challenge regardless.

Ever since arriving at Asgard, he had been living his life holding his breath.

Being surrounded by super high levels over 200, in this place, he was just a newbie.

Level and fame he achieved in the Rubel continent, the pride he had from those achievements broke down like a sand castle on a beach. Instead of showing off the abilities, he couldn't even get a chance to swing his sword once with ease, and he couldn't find a way to regain his confidence that had been downsized once already.

With Dokgo Hoo, who thinks Vulcan as an inferior, and Filder, despite his politeness, who had no expectations from Vulcan, Vulcan wanted to show them what he could do for once.

Rubel continent's strongest mage swordsman, Vulcan's ability.

“Inferno Abyss.”

Beneath Vulcan, the hellfire poured down.

# Chapter 9 - Beginning Of The Training (3)

---

“Wow, hot!”

Alerted by the flame spreading toward where he stood, Dokgo Hoo moved over to a safer place. With protective energy blades pasted all around him, Dokgo Hoo glared at Vulcan from a distance.

‘You little runt with no respect for elders, no respect!’

Vulcan should have warned the others if he was going to use a technique that would spark flames all over the place.

Dokgo Hoo, with an expression of strong disapproval on his face, watched Vulcan.

Regardless of whether Dokgo Hoo was feeling uncomfortable or not, Vulcan focused upon only bringing about the maximum damage that he could possibly deal.

“Infinite Flame Spheres, Infinite Flame Sphere, Infinite Flame Sphere .....

From Vulcan’s mouth, names of techniques were flowing out endlessly. Flame Spheres at the size of billiard balls was suspended in mid air like fruits in vast quantities encircling around the tree, and their number continued to grow.

‘Instead of a single high-class magic, Explosion is the answer!’

At first, Vulcan planned to use the Breath of Dragon, a legendary skill.

The Breath of Dragon’s damage increases proportionally to the time spent channeling mana. If Vulcan combined the Breath of Dragon with Abyss Inferno, it would have boosted up the damage to a level far beyond what he could have dreamed of in ordinary settings.

Still, after careful consideration, Vulcan realized there was one more combination that would be far simpler yet also far more powerful.

Explosion’s damage increases exponentially with more flames in the surrounding.

The Abyss Inferno turns the surrounding into a field of flames and also gives 20% boost to fire element magic.

The Infinite Flame Sphere could be cast multiple times. With Infinite Flame Spheres cast in mass quantities, if Vulcan activated Explosion, he couldn’t even calculate the damage that it could bring about.

Really, the sensation from the current surrounding was far beyond what he envisioned. The heat from the flames greatly exceeded what one expect from a level 99.

The edge of Filder's mouth tilted up slightly as he watched Vulcan.

Unlike Dokgo Hoo, who had to move out of the way because he couldn't stand the flame, Filder was standing his ground.

‘Far greater damage unlike ordinary players..... The techniques themselves were not just a mix of random ones but were rather purposely chosen for maximum synergy. Looks like you weren't simply mastering skills at random.’

Filder's smile became firmer as he realized Vulcan's mastery of fire element magic.

‘The limitation as a player cannot be helped. Still..... This is promising.’

While Filder was making an assessment of Vulcan's abilities, Vulcan's spells continued to cast without interruption.

Before long, several hundred of Infinite Flame Spheres were present in the air, exuding a murderous aura, and the flame on the field generated by the Abyss Inferno was approaching its peak intensity.

Vulcan felt the time limit of the Abyss Inferno approaching, so he prepared one last magic. As he prepared for his mana to be drained rapidly, Vulcan called out the name of the spell that was about to



cause a massive explosion equivalent to igniting several hundred dynamites at once.

“Explosion!”

BOOOOOOMMMMM!

A loud noise, enough to burst eardrums, shook the forest.

\*\*\*

It was a loud explosion as if a volcano had erupted.

Unlike the intensity of the noise produced, the explosion range was not very wide. This was because Vulcan focused the explosion damage on a target object.

Vulcan’s inner state was now in a terrible condition.

It was due to the strain of maintaining control of magic power and also the attempts of various spells.

A single stream of blood flowed down to his chin. His entire body ached as if he was stepped on by several tens of elephants.

Still, a painful sensation of this level couldn’t stop the smile that came from his mouth.

Vulcan watched the grand view in front of him as he drank a vitality potion. Once a proud max level tree with level 130, the tree was now laying on the ground, blown apart.

And that was not all.

The synergy from Abyss Inferno, Infinite Flame Sphere and Explosion was far superior to his expectations.

A few trees near the target were also damaged from the splash damage.

Of them all, one tree was damaged to the point of breaking, and it was at a pathetic state as if it was going to collapse any moment.

Dokgo Hoo was also observing the scene.

Without realizing cold sweat flowing on his back, he could not take his eyes off from the end results that Vulcan produced.

‘All I could do was cut through it half way.....’

There was tree that he couldn’t manage to cut despite palcing all of the knowledge and skills into his strike, and yet Vulcan destroyed a tree that was even sturdier than that. DokGo Hoo felt threatened.

However, he had too much pride to admit that.

Dokgo Hoo cringed and yelled like a rebellious teenage boy.

“This is a draw! I don’t know what it is but magic? Technique? He poured in several tens of them! Can you call this one strike? Mr. Pub-owner Sir?”

That point was something even Vulcan was bothered by slightly.

In reality, although they were not used directly on the tree, both the Infinite Flame Sphere and Abyss Flame were offensive skills.

They were used as ground works for intensifying the Explosion spell’s damage, but there were too many questionable things, so it was hard to argue that this was fair and square.

Still, Vulcan decided to be unyielding and be proud of it.

Above all, he did not like Dokgo Hoo who was trying to discredit him.

“If you are displeased, then you do it too.”

“..... What?”

Dokgo Hoo, who was making a ruckus, stopped.

To Dokgo Hoo, who was making an inquiry as if he was trying to say he misheard, Vulcan said once more.

“If you are displeased, then you do it too like I have.”

“You little twerp how dare you! Have you completely lost your sense of fear!”

With a loud noise, Dokgo Hoo took out his buster sword from the sheath and started to raise-up his internal power.

To not succumb to a sudden attack, Vulcan also took a combat stance. With his Pure Lightning Blade firmly on his right hand, Vulcan stared back at Dokgo Hoo.

“I clearly asked if I was allowed to use skills that will bring about synergy effects, and I received an approval. I don’t know what your problem is, but if you don’t like the end results, what I’m saying is that then you do it too, just like I have. Can’t you have hundreds of energy blades in the air and attack at once?”

With a little bit of belittling smile, Vulcan continued.

“Maybe you are not quite at that level yet?”

“What! This son of a bitch!”

“Spirit Form!”

Dokgo Hoo attacked like a wild beast, and Vulcan soared up to the sky in his lightning spirit form. Exuding murderous intent from his body, Dokgo Hoo swung his sword multiple times, producing half-moon shaped energy blades shooting toward Vulcan, cutting through the blue sky.

“Witch Hunt.”

“KUAAAANK!”

Witch Hunt, which damages the selected target over time, inflicted damage to Dokgo Hoo’s entire body.

Dokgo Hoo was in pain from the flame, but he quickly surrounded himself with defensive energy blades and focused his mind.

‘I am soon a blade, and a blade to be soon myself.’

A mind-and-blade-as-one feat, the kind that you may never get to see even once in your life, was making an appearance once again.

Dokgo Hoo, with a sensation that he had become one with his blade, stared at Vulcan. His muscles were tense, ready to chop an opponent’s head off at any time.

Vulcan also prepared for all foreseeable situations. From his mouth, words for casting spells poured out endlessly. As guards and Infinite Flame Orbs were spread all over, Vulcan prepared Hellfire behind Dokgo Hoo, an immediate attack in case of an opening.

Both Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo were surrounded by incredible tension.

Because of the power emanating from two absolute masters, the situation seemed like the sky and land were holding their breath and just watching.

However, to Filder the pub-owner, this was just a child's play.

“Please, that is enough.”

It felt cold like the sensation of a dagger placed on one's neck by someone that snuck up behind.

The two, who were in a state of great agitation, were rapidly cooling down.

‘Uh.....’

‘KU..... Uh huc.’

Could this be how it feels like when the Grim Reaper is standing

behind and staring?

Being in the presence of such a powerful existence made Vulcan feel suffocated.

Although Filder was only standing still, it alone was enough to make Vulcan feel terrified. Dokgo Hoo felt the same. He too was engulfed in terror.

Without even thinking about resisting, the two withdrew themselves.

The terrifying pressure that dominated their body also disappeared, as if it was never there.

Filder walked to the front of the two who were staring at him steadily. To Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo, who became like weak little lambs in front of a fearsome predator, Filder started to talk gently.

“Mr. Dokgo Hoo, and Mr. Vulcan.”

“..... Yes.”

“.....”

“I am well aware that both of you are strong, and no matter which world you two were placed, you both would be counted among the best. The mind-and-blade-as-one technique that Mr.

Dokgo Hoo just demonstrated was magnificent, and Mr. Vulcan as well has reached new ground that talented mages could not reach, even from a lifetime of devotion.”

There was no back talking from the two.

Filder continued as if he wasn't expecting any in the first place.

“However, in this place, in Asgard, you two are nothing but newbies who have to give everything you have to cut down just a tree. What I'm trying to say is that there is a need for the two of you to think more objectively about the situations you two are in.”

The two flinched.

“Being at the height of absolute power? There isn't anyone here that never has achieved such a feat. Being at the level of mind-and-blade-as-one? Again, there isn't anyone here that can't do that either. You must remember. The two of you are the weakest of all residents in Beloong city.”

Filder lifted his left hand, straightened his index and middle fingers, and made gestures of cutting through the air. Including the tree that Dokgo Hoo could not cut, over thirty max-level trees collapsed in succession.

“.....!”

“Half of Beloong city can probably do this.”



Filder's sight turned toward Dokgo Hoo. Dokgo was biting his lips with the kind of expression that made it uncertain if he was infuriated or ashamed. His arm holding the blade was shaking rapidly.

“Drawing the sword to protect the honor of a swordsman, exerting overflowing confidence to an opponent, they are both good. Without that much pride, getting to a level to enter Asgard is impossible. It is a necessary element for stepping towards new heights. However, exuding fighting spirit without being fully aware of one's own abilities is nothing but simple foolishness. Are two of you here to protect your pride or to train?”

The two couldn't react to Filder's insightful scolding.

“In Asgard, there is a group called ‘the defeated’. It is referring to those who stand still, making no progress despite being here for ten or even a hundred years.

Saying that by doing so will make them lose face or wreck their style. They acted high and mighty, they were the people that ignored the advice of others. They were the kind of people that ignored basic training and only put their pride first, the types that only sought after quick and easy routes. As always, they were surpassed by other visitors who came after them. And now they are living a life being ignored by all, just like fallen knights or runaway mercenaries that were common in the worlds you once lived in.”

Vulcan tightened his fists.

He never once considered himself as arrogant.

It was just luck that he obtained the power of a player, and with that, he was able to grow easily and fast.

Because he knew his achievements weren't entirely by his own, he had no reason to take pride in or be arrogant about them.

‘.....Did I truly think that way?’

The answer was, ‘no.’

He simply acted like it, but he was definitely full of arrogance.

Vulcan looked back at himself.

He recollected instances where he looked down upon and belittled strangers. He used a cheat called SYSTEM, yet he criticized and discredited those who got stronger from training hard for several decades.

Even in Asgard, he was still the same. Even for practitioners with level 200 or 300, Vulcan did not have even an ounce of respect for them.

‘Just you watch, I will level up quick like an explosion and get you all.’

That was Vulcan’s true feelings.

To Vulcan, who is like that, Filder was trying to say that Asgard is not such a pushover.

“.....As planned, the basic training will continue. As for Mr. Vulcan, although you did succeed in destroying a tree, it was not a normal method, and you probably know it very well. If you have objections, I will be fine with you going back to the city, even right now.”

There wasn’t a single person who took a step away.

“.....Your pride and confidence, I will be holding onto them for a while. The training tasks may appear to be useless and lacking in style, but still, please try very hard to follow as if your lives depend on them. I will give you returns with interest within a short amount of time. To ensure that two of you are able to set foot on the new grounds, where you can mow down these trees in hundreds by the time the training is over, I will try my best.”

Filder took a bow with his head after finishing his speech.

From somewhere, a gust of wind flew in and blew away the concentrated heat that was generated at area of the battle.

Vulcan reminisced about the time he first fell to Rubel continent. He thought about the Filder's speech, which made him feel like he has reverted back to Level 1.

Even Dokgo Hoo who was standing still, could feel something.

Just like that, the training under Filder the pub-owner had started.

# Chapter 10 - Training For Him, But Gruntwork For Me (1)

---

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM.

Sounds of heavy pounding, like a hammer striking down on a sturdy ore.

Little wild animals fled in all directions, frightened by the loud noise.

One by one, large trees fell with a thump sound.

There were two men working hard cutting down trees, they were Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo, fully focused on the training.

“Son of a bee~ this one is ridiculously hard. It’s just a tree. How could it be so strong? What has it been eating?”

Dokgo Hoo complained as he wiped off the sweats flowing like rain.

Vulcan too was thinking the same thing as he listened to Dokgo Hoo.

Ever since the day the two heard the speech from Filder, they were training against trees as their opponent for over ten days.

Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo had mixed feelings of embarrassment and resolve since hearing Filder's wake-up call advice. The two worked hard on blade strikes even though there was nobody checking in on them.

Sparing very little time for sleep, they devoted their time to swinging weapons and casting magic toward trees.

It had been a few hours since.

An odd mood filled the training ground. That is, Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo formed a competitive practice.

“HAAP! HUUATT!”

“.....”

Just as Vulcan was about to sit down, thinking he should take a break, he could instead hear Dokgo Hoo's battle cries.

It had sounded like the tone of his voice had gotten louder, and it also felt like he was laughing at Vulcan.

Vulcan began to think that sitting idle meant defeat, so he straightened his back and continued to train with even louder battle cries.

The same thing happened when Dokgo Hoo was about to take a break. Noticing Vulcan's faint smile directed at him, Dokgo Hoo threw away the thought of letting go of the sword.

The one to take a break first would be the loser!

In this strange duel, day and night switched places several times.

However, there was no such a thing as an endless duel. In the end, Dokgo Hoo sat down where he initially stood and he started to express his defeat.

“Ohhhhhh, I can't do it anymore. And you, what kind of a brat never gets tired? Are you even human?”

“I was just born with relatively good stamina.”

It was bullshit.

With the SYSTEM's help, a player does not need to physically take out a potion and drink it by mouth.

A mere thought of using it automatically brought about the same effect, and Vulcan had already consumed a bottle of stamina potion using this method without Dokgo Hoo ever realizing.

Vulcan, with a smile on his face, looked at Dokgo Hoo.

Dokgo Hoo made some noise expressing his exhaustion and quickly turned his head away.

“Mr. Vulcan, you have been working hard! It appears Mr. Dokgo Hoo is working while taking breaks here and there?”

Filder appeared among the clearcut woods.

With a wrongfully accused expression on his face, Dokgo Hoo immediately stood up and explained himself.

“No, I was training until now without sleep or food, but then I got cramps on my muscles for a moment.....”

“I was just kidding. I am aware that you didn’t take any breaks until now.”

Hearing Filder’s tactless words turned Dokgo Hoo’s face red, but he didn’t do anything like expressing his anger.

‘After what happened last time, there is no way he is going to do it again.’

The power of Filder, the doctor of rectifying anger issues, could be felt.

“Mr. Dokgo Hoo, may I see your wrist for a moment?”



Filder the healer said to Dokgo Hoo.

Dokgo Hoo was about to say something, but then decided not to after looking at Filder.

It was because Filder looked very serious and sincere.

For those who learned martial arts, giving someone their wrists meant handing over the control of their body. Essentially, it meant handing over their life.

Because of this, what Filder requested could be considered extremely rude. However, because Filder's expression clearly showed that there was no ill intention, Dokgo Hoo lifted his left hand willingly.

Filder grabbed Dokgo Hoo's wrist, which was thick like a piece of log, and said,

“Mr. Dokgo Hoo, I'm going to start sending in concentrated energy to your internals. It is compatible with Tiger King Technique's concentrated energy, so please do not reject it and trust me. Also, remember the flow of the power.”

“What.....!”

Filder sent concentrated energy without giving Dokgo Hoo a chance to speak.

The power originating from within Filder moved through Dokgo Hoo's entire blood circulation system as if the bloodstream was its own home, but Dokgo Hoo couldn't do anything.

The situation was that someone else's energy has invaded deep inside his body. If anybody did anything wrong, it could cripple him most likely.

Blood vein bulked up on Dokgo Hoo's temple.

Dokgo Hoo thought Filder was just going to check the body's status, not use it like his own.

'This little bastard... I treated you a little well out of respect for having higher level than me, but putting me through a disgrace like this? Once he lets go of me.... Once he does... huh?'

Dokgo Hoo was giving Filder a look with murderous intent, but now his eyes was filled with a completely different light.

This was due to the amazing efficiency of flowing energy from Filder to Dokgo Hoo.

The energy movement was not too different from the Tiger King Technique, but the energy was flowing in directions, speed and ways that he never thought of once, and Dokgo Hoo was strongly intrigued by it all.

Filder's energy finally exited Dokgo Hoo's body after going around his entire blood circulatory system three times.

Even after Filder released his hand and moved back to where he was previously, Dokgo Hoo was still standing motionless as if he grew roots on the ground.

‘This is..... How could such a method.....!’

Dokgo Hoo was astonished and terrified.

Filder's internal energy operation method was so innovative that Dokgo Hoo could never have thought of.

Overall, the modifications were minimal, about five percent or less.

However, he had to admit that the improvement was far beyond comparison from the original state.

This year marked the year that Dokgo Hoo lived to be 60 years.

Over the years, he experienced numerous martial art techniques, and several times he fought head-on with priestesses and Shaolin martial artists that were considered to be the best, but he never once thought his Tiger-King Technique were lacking.

Dokgo Hoo was proud of his internal energy technique's

completeness, yet to think that Filder improved it so much, Dokgo Hoo felt for the first time that there is another sky above the sky.

The memories of the past went through Dokgo Hoo's head.

He could see his old self, lacking in many ways, swinging a sword.

His head started to fill with examinations of mistakes that he did not notice before, and ways of improvement also came up automatically.

Over his already advanced martial art technique, new enlightenment was being layered on again and again.....

All of these were becoming fertilizers to elevate Dokgo Hoo to a new dimension.

He could not think straight from a storm of enlightenment rushing at him.

The wide and deep world of martial art was also welcoming Dokgo Hoo.

\*\*\*

Dokgo Hoo's appearance was anything but ordinary.

The blue light energy lingering around Dokgo Hoo entered through his nose and exited by his mouth, repeating.

Above his head were energy blades of strange shapes. Clumped together and invoking a strange sensation, they made it feel like the ‘moment of enlightenment’, that martial artists often speak of, had arrived.

The moment of enlightenment that makes an ordinary soldier into a knight and an ordinary knight into a fighter that represents a kingdom.

This was a moment that anyone who stepped into the path of martial art could never refuse, and this moment had arrived to a martial artist of absolute power, Dokgo Hoo.

Looking at Dokgo Hoo in such a moment, Vulcan’s face filled with envy.

‘I can’t even get a feel for how much stronger he will become.....’

There was one time in Rubel continent where a similar incident occurred.

When Vulcan was at level 45, a common mercenary who was forming a party to hunt the southern jungle’s monsters.

Vulcan experienced ‘the moment of enlightenment’ when he slew the boss monster Giant Arachnid, and after practicing sword

dance for about a day, he became level 67.

From just the level of skilled mercenary, his ability rose to that of someone worthy of becoming the leader of a small country's knights.

After that incident, Vulcan hoped and wondered if good fortune like that would ever come across again. For a while, every time before going to sleep, he attempted to reach the moment of enlightenment, hoping for another explosive level-up.

However, hoping was just that, hoping.

Vulcan had long since folded any hopes for such a thing.

Since the beginning, he didn't become a magic swordsman because he was talented at swordsmanship and lightning & flame magic, he was using skills that were automatically acquired from the power called the SYSTEM which allowed him to increase his mastery like a machine.

'Let alone enlightenment, it is hard as it is to understand the skills I have.'

Vulcan sighed.

The moment of enlightenment was something that Vulcan wished for long ago, but it was happening to someone right beside him, and that made him feel disappointed.

Vulcan scanned Dokgo Hoo's level.

[Third-rate Swordsman Dokgo Hoo]

[104Lv]

His level, which was 92 only a moment ago, had already rose up to 104.

As for Vulcan himself, he was up by only one from level 99, now level 100, and that was from cutting down numerous Max Level trees with an average level of 130. It was not worth to compare the progress that Dokgo Hoo had obtained.

Vulcan observed Dokgo Hoo, who was lost in the world of his consciousness, not being able to notice anything around him.

This could not be the end.

It was very likely that by the time the moment of enlightenment completely passes, Dokgo Hoo would be far stronger than level 104.

Vulcan felt a bitter taste in his mouth.

However, he eased his hardened facial expression and directed

his sight to Filder.

Filder was scattering pebbles around Dokgo Hoo, who was standing defenseless. Most likely, it was a way to protect Dokgo Hoo.

When Filder put down the last pebble as he murmured a few words, a translucent layer surrounding Dokgo Hoo's vicinity had appeared.

“URATCHACHA.”

Filder straightened his back and made a big stretch, and Vulcan continued staring at Filder.

In middle of massaging his back with gentle strikes with his hand, Filder looked at Vulcan with face full of questions.

“Umm?”

“Umg?”

“What is it?”

“Uh.....”

Filder's question, ‘What is it?’, made Vulcan at lost for words.



‘Hurry up and make me become stronger like him! But I can’t just tell him that.’

Vulcan thought that since Filder bestowed Dokgo Hoo with a teaching of immense value, maybe Filder would also give Vulcan some kind method to breakthrough?

Afterall, Filder promised before that he would allow them to quickly reclaim their diminished pride.

Surely, Filder was going to show Vulcan a shortcut that is perfect for Vulcan who is a ‘player.’

Vulcan looked at Filder with eyes filled of expectation.

At the sight of Vulcan’s uncomfortable gaze, Filder pointed his finger somewhere.

And that somewhere was.....

“What are you doing? Continue doing it.”

There stood Max Level trees.

# Chapter 11 - Training For Him, But Gruntwork For Me (2)

---

BOOM. BOOM.

In the middle of a forest that would have been peaceful on an ordinary day, the sound of explosions continued endlessly.

In the place of the sound's origin, there stood an insane man swinging his blade.

It was a young man with black hair and a golden colored blade in his hand, Vulcan.

Beating on the Max Level trees in certain tempo, Vulcan looked no different from a tree-cutting machine.

Vulcan looked as if he had lost his soul. He drank potions whenever he lost his stamina, and focused on just cutting down the trees.

There was the skill window in front of Vulcan's eyes glowing in translucency.

[Novice Magic Swordsman Vulcan]

[102Lv]

[Passive Skills List]

\*Combat Mastery S -> B

\*Weapon Mastery S -> C -> B (Rank Up)

\*Defense Mastery A -> C

\*Evasion Mastery S -> B

.....

Fire Mastery S -> B

Lightning Mastery S -> B

Cold Mastery B -> D

Necromancy Mastery C -> E

“Oh, weapon mastery rank up. Nice.”

Vulcan smiled big. Even his voice was filled with joy.

However, it was only for a brief moment. Vulcan sighed and looked at the skill list window once more.

‘Let alone S, the skill window is devoid of even one A.....’

The skills list use to be full of S and A ranks, but now it was in a pathetic state.

Apparently, once Vulcan became level 100, he was acknowledged as a resident of Asgard, and at the same time, all of his skill ranks were adjusted to the lofty standards of Asgard.

It was sickening.

There was one more thing that was even more troubling.

Unlike practitioners that achieved their levels through normal course, players had no methods to become stronger other than a simple repetitive training.

In other words, the best course was just doing grunt-works.

‘Even so, I thought there might be a way.’

Vulcan thought Filder, the greatest fiend of Beloong city where all fiends gather, might know a way of rapid growth for a player who got to his level using cheats. However, it was apparently not so.

It was true that Filder was the best teacher. Rich in his experience and insightful in his methods, for Filder, who had the best abilities, teaching 90 levelers was easy enough to be considered a chore.

From Filder's perspective, Dokgo Hoo was just a baby chick level swordsman, and Filder made it possible for Dokgo Hoo to make a breakthrough growth by observing him for a while and providing a little bit of guidance.

Perhaps it was obvious how Filder could do it. Filder said so himself that he had been training newcomers for several hundred years.

However, there were those that even Filder could not teach: the so-called players.

When it came to teaching players, even Filder was powerless.

After all, teaching was possible if the student had the smarts for it.

Players got to where they were through auto skill acquisition and level ups, so they had no basic knowledge or understanding for the abilities. Players were like young children with over powered strengths.

Teaching players were like trying to teach high-level calculus to

newborn babies. Hence Filder gave up on trying to make players understand the basis for abilities, and instead he had no choice but to select a training method that actively utilizes the system.

“Mr. Vulcan, it looks like your basic mastery levels are pretty good. Other players focus on leveling up, powerful active skills and item acquisition. They ignore basic passive combat skills.”

“Ah, thank you.”

“From that regard, how about we combine blade technique and magic training together? Maintain three Hellfires and cut down trees with your blade. Is that all right?”

“..... Yes! Of course. Haha!”

Vulcan felt that something bad was about to happen, so he smiled awkwardly.

\*\*\*

Since the time when Vulcan understood the SYSTEM's basic functions and was experienced enough to be no longer called a novice, he had been mindful of the basic passive skills' mastery levels.

Combat, weapons techniques, avoidance, fire, lightning and etc., the basic skills affect a wide category of attributes. Vulcan did not neglect the basic skills because although the basic skills do not

have the power to turn the tide of a battle, Vulcan thought they are the core skills that strengthen the basic battle abilities.

Therefore, Vulcan worked hard on raising the basic passive skills' masteries at every chance he got, even when he was not hunting. In middle of a battle, instead of just slaying the monsters, he did so in ways that maximized the basic skills masteries. When Vulcan had potions to spare, he accumulated masteries while taking on damage intentionally.

Still, investing time like this for the sole purpose of raising masteries like a machine was a first for even Vulcan.

It had been over two weeks since Dokgo Hoo fell into the unconscious world. Meanwhile, Vulcan, excluding one hour of break per day, fully invested all of his time for mastery training.

Exhaustion, damage and mana depletion from over exertion were taken care of using the potion that Filder brought.

The potion was so effective that one sip of it fully replenished all three stats. However, that did not make Vulcan feel grateful. Instead, it made him feel more rebellious.

‘Eat this and work harder, my slave.’

Even though Filder wasn't saying anything, Vulcan felt as if Filder's look on his face was saying so, and that was creeping out Vulcan. He always thought Filder's smiling look was gentle and

comfortable, but now it wasn't so.

Vulcan thought perhaps medieval peasants working under lordships might have been more comfortable than this.

“Excuse me..... Can you please increase the break time a little? I think training so hard while over exerting myself like this may lead to problems.....”

“What kind of problems? I think everything is going well.”

“Uh... If I keep pushing myself like this, I can't focus properly and I think it is reducing efficiency, and .....

“Regardless, isn't a player's mastery level going to rise as long as repeat training is done? There is no need to focus. Just keep on repeating the process. Also, the potion I brought is potent enough to fully recover a super sized monster from brink of death, so you don't need to worry about your health.”

“Ugh.....”

Vulcan dropped his head.

He thought about the time in his original world, before he came to these new dimensions, when he was in high school and played video games mindlessly.



Back then, there were people in a similar situation as himself, the video game room laborers. In a workroom, they worked for a boss, mining ores and running same macros whole day, mindlessly. Vulcan used to only look down on them, but now he could understand how they must have felt.

How difficult it must have been. Vulcan's eyes were watering with tears.

‘This is not training. This is ..... This is just a slave labor. A slave labor from hell!’

Vulcan felt sympathy toward the faceless video game room laborers.

Braking Vulcan's train of thought, Filder spoke.

“It's really magnificent. Excellent! I believe I have underestimated you, Mr. Vulcan. From now on, I will attack you occasionally. If you increase avoidance mastery at the same time, you can become stronger faster!”

“If you try that, I could die!”

“It's all fine! If you take my potion, you will fully recover!”

“Ah.....”

‘Please let me rest just for a day..... Let me live..... No, just kill me. I will be comfortable at least if I’m dead.....’

Vulcan was really envious of Dokgo Hoo who was still just standing there unaware of all this.

\*\*\*

A month passed training for Vulcan’s masteries. It started with just cutting down trees, but because Filder added new objectives along the way and increased the difficulty, the training turned into something completely different.

It was no longer appropriate to call it a grunt-work training. It felt more like a shooting game with Vulcan as the target.

Vulcan was rolling around the ground like a soldier in a battlefield with his life on the line.

“BABABABAM!”

Vulcan dodged the large icicle popping out of the ground and swung his pure lightning blade. A Fireball that came out of nowhere got deflected to the sky after being hit by the blade.

Aiming for Vulcan, who momentarily stopped to deflect the Fireball, Ice Arrows that were circling around Vulcan rained down on him from all directions.

Using Infinite Flame Spheres and Hellfires he prepared earlier, Vulcan intercepted the ice arrows. As for the ones that could not be intercepted, Vulcan moved his upper body to dodge them.

“BOOOM! CHIIIIIK.....”

Ice arrows and Infinite Flame Spheres collided and created a massive amount of steam. In cover of the mist, a skeleton holding a long sphere charged forward.

[Weakened Skeleton King Wrelic]

[95Lv]

It was the same bastard that Vulcan was sick of fighting face-to-face for ten days.

The skeleton king's sphere charged toward Vulcan, piercing through the mist. Vulcan avoided the attack by angling his body. He moved in close to the skeleton king and tilted his head down.

Skeleton king's wind cutter sliced through the space, aiming toward back of Vulcan's head. Vulcan, raising his head, spoke the skill activation codes.

“Thunder God’s Strike!”

“CLASH!”

The rapid sword technique cutting across upward from the lower left stroke the skeleton king, but it did not break the protective spell that the summoner cast.

Vulcan cursed inside. He kicked the skeleton king’s head with his left foot and cast spell rapidly.

“Hellfire! Infinite Flame Sphere, Infinite Flame Sphere, Infinite Flame Sphere, Infinite Flame Sphere.....”

Without re-generating spent magic spells at every chance he had, Vulcan could be defenseless against magic attacks coming at him constantly from all over the direction. Vulcan’s mouth moved rapidly.

“Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere Infinite Flame Sphere.....”

Vulcan looked ridiculous repeating the same set of words over and over as if he had a form of speech impairment, but it could not be helped.

A player that acquired the magic without understanding it had a critical flaw; the player could not cast the magic without saying out loud the name of the spell.

To overcome this a little, Vulcan cast Haste to his mouth to cast spells. It would have been too taxing to cast Haste on his entire body, so it was a desperate measure for the time being.

In an instant, Vulcan created a Hellfire and over hundred of Infinite Flame Sphere, and he took a dive to the left side. The ground that Vulcan was standing a moment ago already turned into a hazardous area filled with lava.

‘KUAAAAAAA! This is too strong! This is insane!’

Vulcan thought to himself. His inner cry could almost be heard. However, for Filder and Berenere, the sight was just an entertaining spectacle like a high-production value action movie.

“Filder, he is blocking the ice magic too easily. How about mixing in more of wind magic that is not very visible? Or use earth magic that would be hard to block with fire spells.”

“Hmm..... Indeed earth magic would be appropriate. On the other hand, there is no need to use the wind magic. After all, players do not dodge by looking. Instead the avoidance skill activates automatically.”

“Ah right, you said that guy is a player. Kuku. The way he moves

so fluently, I thought he was a normal magic swordsman. For a player to move so smoothly, it is quite a curious thing to see, huhuhu.”

The one exchanging words with Filder was Berenere, the general store owner. He was an elderly man wearing a black pointy hat and a black robe, traditional black mage clothing.

His face was full of wrinkles and moles, and his back was so hunched that it looked like he could not stand up without a cane. His appearance made it seem like he could die of old age at any moment, but the sharp and piercing gaze from his eyes overpowered everything else.

Along with Filder, the one that is counted among the top six in Beloong city.

The one that lead his own world to the brink of destruction, Berenere the necromancer of pure evil.

However now he was just an ordinary general store owner. He sold general items to people during the day, and during the night, he helped Filder to train newbies.

Filder continued the conversation with Berenere while not taking his eyes off of Vulcan’s training.

“It certainly is. He is different from ordinary players. Now that I think about it, he had higher mastery levels from the start of the

training. I have high expectations.”

“Hum! Having high expectations for a player! They are the kind that came up here without any effort! They may have been parading around as geniuses in the lower dimensions full of weaklings, but up here, they are nothing but talent-less lazy bums!”

Berenere spoke with disapproval. Filder responded with a smile.

“Even so, it appears this kid did not slack off in putting in hard work and effort. It is apparent that he sharpened and polished his skills through continuous training. To start with, the way he uses the skills is quite efficient.”

“..... Certainly, unlike those that lack potential, you can tell this one had been working hard. However, it is all about talent, talent. In this place full of fiends, could players with no talents clear even Act 1.....”

“.....”

“You too, fold your hopes and expectations, and just mind training Dokgo-whatever guy instead. Unlike how he looks, he has an incredible potential.”

Filder responded with silence to Berenere’s negative comments. It wasn’t like Filder disagreed.

Most of players were garbage. They came to Asgard without any special abilities, and they always blamed equipment and hunting ground. They also fell behind improving masteries through hard work.

They always sought after ways to level up easily, and by the might of the monsters far exceeding the strength of the monsters in lower dimensions, these players lost their lives.

Of course, there were exceptions among these players. Ones that did not refuse painful trainings, ones that spared little for sleep or food to fully commit themselves to training. Filder too invested heavily for the sake of their progress.

However, the end results were failures.

The wall of First-Rate. For these players, getting to level 300 was the limit. There were no exceptions. To have abilities appropriate for the higher level, the players were too lacking in progression speeds for basic skills masteries.

In the end, it was talent.

Without basic understanding and knowledge on martial arts and magic, the players were not rewarded proportionally for the efforts that they poured in. They could not overcome the basic skills masteries requirement that increased exponentially with the level.

System was like a cheat key for those in low levels, but as they



approached higher levels, System became a shackle in iron that hindered progress.

Players, one by one, became frustrated and gave up. Filder too was starting to fold his hopes and expectations.

But then.....

“He could be different.”

“Umm?”

Berenere looked at Filder as if he just made a blunder.

Filder observed Vulcan in silence.

Vulcan was running all over the place to dodge the coordinated attacks from magic spells and Skeleton King. Filder gazed upon Vulcan steadily.

Filder decided to hope one last time and put his faith in a player named Vulcan.

Filder’s hand moved rapidly to cast spells.

# Chapter 12 - When Talent And Cheat Codes Meet (1)

---

The internal energy started to stabilize from being in the state of turbulence. It had been two months since the wave of internal energy, which poured out at once like water from a broken dam, circulated through the body.

Dokgo Hoo’s blood circulatory system expanded and became stronger to the point where it was beyond comparison from the past.

It was like a little creek turning into a gigantic river.

Dokgo Hoo, sensing the internal energy fully charged, opened his eyes.

[Third-Rate Swordsman Dokgo Hoo]

[184Lv]

‘Impressive.’

It was unbelievable at how much stronger he became in comparison to what he was before receiving the teachings. One thing for certain was that he could handle ten of his former-self easily.

Now, he felt like he could use two swords technique freely and smoothly. When he was just about to try,

“If you are going to check the status of your body, please do so after moving away from this place. As you can see, it is quite a mess.....”

Filder suddenly appeared in front of Dokgo Hoo.

Dokgo Hoo panicked and looked at Filder awkwardly.

Dokgo Hoo wanted to say something, but he could not organize what to say first in his head.

‘That I am thankful for the achievement? That I am sorry I was rude until now? No. This is not the kind of occasion where saying mere thank you would be enough. Should I call him my master? Becoming a disciple at this age? Uh..... Should I just put up a poker face and ignore it? It doesn’t look like Filder will say anything.....’

“Please look around you.”

Dokgo Hoo was deep in thoughts, but he was awakened by Filder’s words and looked around. And then he gasped in surprise.

“Hut, this is.....”

“Yes, it is a complete mess. Congratulation on your achievements, but if you are going to check the status of your body, please leave this place first and calmly do so at a different spot.”

Dokgo Hoo nodded.

Indeed, the place was too much of a mess to go over all the changes from the enlightenment. If it wasn't for the protective layer that Filder established, Dokgo Hoo would have been swept away into the middle of the chaos.

Dokgo Hoo bowed a little with his head to express his gratitude and then he moved to a place far away from the forest.

Meanwhile, sounds of endless explosions and sword strikes could be heard from the back.

‘That guy, what kind of training is he doing... making such loud noises.....’

\*\*\*

It has been over two months since the start of the training.

Vulcan's training became harder by the day. In the past, there were brief moment of relief scattered about to catch his breath or think about things, but now it was no longer the case.

The kind of attacks that could not be avoided even with intuition, instinct, and the help of the SYSTEM were coming at him. Vulcan had no choice but withstand the attacks using Ironclad skill, which raises the entire body's defensive ability, and potions.

Even with those, Vulcan was approaching the limit. He was barely getting by.

He would have had some allowances to spare if the masteries increased faster and if he ranked up, but that was not the case, and Vulcan was still only at level 103.

Long gone were the days where he rose up 10 – 20 levels fast.

‘I need to find a way somehow!’

Vulcan could either collapse after holding out as long as he could or ask Filder to reduce the difficulty, but Vulcan did not want to.

Vulcan survived through his harsh life by his resolve alone. Vulcan felt uneasy. He was worried he may never clear the Act 1 if he gave up because of a training like this.

“Thunder God's Might!”

Thunder God's Might: a technique that continuously spends

mana to buff lightning attack and movement speed.

It was a technique Vulcan did not use often because it had a shortcoming. The technique made the control of the body extremely difficult.

‘Ugh..... As I thought, I can’t move my body as I want!’

Vulcan used the vastly increased speed to get out of the area-effective magic attack’s range.

However, now that he had given up precision control of the body, he couldn’t properly avoid minor magic attacks coming at him.

Speed in exchange of control of the body, Vulcan was in a pinch.

However, he couldn’t afford to disengage Thunder God’s Might. It was due to having the skill active that Vulcan could avoid critical hits and hang on.

Vulcan agonized over the situation.

He already used all methods he could use. He used the greatest of all of his abilities and pushed himself to the breaking point. If that was not enough, then he had to show something else that was above and beyond.

‘This Thunder God’s Might..... I have to control it!’

Vulcan maintained his focus while avoiding frantic attacks flying at him. He suppressed the Thunder God's Might, which was zooming around all over the place, and attempted to tame it so it could be directed the way he wanted.

However, it was not easy. Like a live fish that slips out of one's hand when grasped harder, the Thunder God refused Vulcan's directions and ran amok.

The Thunder God's Might fiercely resisted to escape Vulcan's attempt to control. Eventually, glitchy movement became more frequent, and the situation was heading toward the direction worse than before the Thunder God's Might was activated.

Watching the Thunder God's Might acting like a brat made Vulcan furious. If this continued, collapsing to the ground in defeat was only a matter of time.

'I feel like there were times where it worked fine.'

Vulcan thought about the time in Rubel continent.

He remembered that after acquiring the Thunder God's Might for the first time, Vulcan used it for 24 hours straight to get use to the power.

Even then, he gave up because the power wanted to move aimlessly.

When he wanted to run straight, it moved in zigzag lines. When he wanted to move a hundred meters, it moved another fifty meters. The Thunder God's Might was running amok more ferociously than a wild horse.

After the stress reached the limit, Vulcan decided to let go of all control and just let it run free in a wasteland before sealing the skill. With all restraints and controls released, the Thunder God's Might displayed even more power and turned Vulcan's internals upside down.

‘Right, once I let go of all control, its speed was substantially greater. Although its wasteful movements were a problem..... wait?’

Vulcan was bombarded with questions in his head.

‘What's my purpose here? Moving with efficiency? Is it necessary to avoid attacks with paper-thin precision? I just need to move with a method that makes avoiding and striking easier, don't I? There is no need to be concerned about wastefulness in the movements.....’

Vulcan stopped controlling the Thunder God's Might.

The sparks surrounding Vulcan ran all over the place in excitement.



‘I just need to move in the direction I want, isn’t that right?’

Vulcan’s movements changed.

Until now, Vulcan prioritized in minimal and precise movements for maintaining balance and being ready for the next movement. Now, his movements were like a wild animal that was running around excited because it could not control its own strength.

The change was like a swordsmanship instructor that strives for efficient movement turning into a caveman that only relies on instinct.

Although the former sounded like the logical choice, the end result was the opposite. Vulcan was having so much difficulty avoiding attacks, but now his face was starting to show signs of relief.

‘Yes! This is it!’

Until now, Vulcan was obsessing over efficient movements.

Reducing unnecessary movements were important. If an attack could be avoided by tilting the head, dodging it by taking a dive instead meant wasting movement and energy, and the wasted movements had negative consequences to the next movements.

Vulcan always thought that such negative consequences would accumulate over a battle and lead to defeat.

That was the reason why Vulcan always strived for precise and efficient movements.

However, if such efforts meant suppressing the true potential of the Thunder God's Might, then the resulting movements could no longer be considered efficient.

BOOM! BOOBOOBOOM!

Pieces of rocks flew at him from all directions, and vines growing out of the ground's surface persistently targeted Vulcan. He dodged them all by moving over a hundred meters in distance.

It was a lot further than the intended distance, but he didn't mind it. What was important was that he dodged the attacks. He didn't mind the minor details.

Vulcan got rid of thoughts about efficient movements, and instead, he focused his mind on another direction; moving fast.

Moving at a speed that nobody can follow, moving so fast to the point of being un-noticeable and putting the opponent into a state of confusion.

‘Moving like a real lightning!’

With Thunder God's Might, Vulcan's movement became faster

and faster.

The movements were rough and unpolished, but the waste from it all were more than made up for by the overwhelming speed, and it made Vulcan feel safe.

BOOBOOBOOBOOBOOM!

Magic attacks came at Vulcan from all directions, not excluding air and ground, but despite being in thick of it all, Vulcan still had moments to spare.

Vulcan charged at the Skeleton King at a lightning like speed. It was now laughable to watch the Skeleton King swing his spear so slowly.

Vulcan laughed. This training, which was so painful until now, was now unbearably fun.

In middle of sensation that enlightenment brings, a notification from the system was mixed in.

[Lightning mastery ranked up from B to A]

\*\*\*

Filder jumped up.

Unlike his usual smiling face, Filder's face was filled with surprise.

“How!”

Filder's gaze moved toward the noises' source of origin. He could see Vulcan running around the field in a noticeably faster speed. The movements were big and frequently wasteful, but Filder did not think it was sloppy.

It did not take Filder a long time to accurately analyze the meaning behind Vulcan's movements.

It was by the power of the Thunder God.

“How could he.....”

Filder repeated the same words over and over.

It was a sight that even Filder, who lived for several thousands of years, could not help but to be surprised by. What Vulcan was showing was something that astonishing.

Filder thought at first that Vulcan's mastery improved from repeated training, but he realized that was not the case.

From the start, Vulcan had masteries substantially higher than other players of same level.

It was strange that Lightning mastery ranked up in such a short amount of time. It should have taken him ten years or more.

Even without thinking about such questions, Filder could tell that this was not a result of repeated training with the SYSTEM.

This was not due to such things.

This was not from relying on a cheat called SYSTEM, but something more pure, something considered as a blessing to some, a curse to another.

The single most important thing necessary for reaching a higher ground.

“Talent.....”

Pure talent.

It was the pure talent that led Vulcan to a new world.

‘Was there ever a player that had enough talent to come to Asgard without SYSTEM’s help?’

Filder thought about it hard, but he could not think of any. Other than Vulcan in front of him, he never saw talent of such level from anyone.

In fact, he never even heard of rumors about such talent.

All of them would have had been leading ordinary lives in lower dimensions if it wasn't for the cheat-like guarantee from the SYSTEM.

From Filder's perspective, players were people to be envious of and also to be pitied upon.

He was envious of the SYSTEM's ability which was powerful enough to allow someone with no talent to arrive at Asgard, and he also felt pity for the ones crawling at the bottom of the Asgard despite having such an ability.

Looking at players, who seemed to have both the blessing and curse, Filder occasionally thought about the following.

'If a talent that could reach ultra high level without the SYSTEM was to be aided by the SYSTEM, how far could that go?'

Filder thought of it as nothing but a pipedream.

However, his pipedream had become a reality in front of him.

Nobody could deny it.

If it wasn't for a God's send talent, there was no way for anyone to reach a new level with the Thunder God in middle of a battle. It was implausible to have grown so much in just a little over two months.

A human being of ordinary talent could not have entered the unconscious world that comes from the enlightenment.

“Berenere... Mereham, Rockweed, Folken, Heywood. At last..... I found one.”

Filder's heart was filling with awe and excitement looking at Vulcan.

Filder's shaking voice was mixed with joy that he could not hide.

‘I wonder what the look on their faces will be like when the five hears about this.’

Filder thought about for a moment. Most likely, they were going to be more surprised about it than him.

Filder controlled his breath and calmed himself down. Filder looked at Vulcan with a firm gaze.

It was time to change the training method.

## Chapter 13 - When Talent And Cheat Codes Meet (2)

---

Inside an artificial cave created by cutting a part of a mountain, there was an elderly mage—who looked so old that it would not have looked out of ordinary if he collapsed suddenly—explaining something endlessly.

In front of the elderly mage, there was a young man—who looked so bored and unfocused with his expressionless face—listening to the mage’s explanation with one ear to letting it escape the other ear.

The 103 level magic swordsman Vulcan was going through a brutal physical training only moments ago, but now he was looking at the elderly mage with unfocused eyes.

“.....and that’s how you can establish the fundamentals of using basic magic power. Other phony methods claiming to be better are not needed. This is the method acknowledged by not only me, but also demigods and those with dragon heritage. So you just need to master this properly and you will be able to use any kind of magic freely. KULKULKUL..... Of course, if there is any particular subject that you want to specialize, there is a way you can delve into it.....”

“Excuse me. I am not understanding any of what you are saying.”

Vulcan raised his hand and interrupted Berenere’s explanation. The elderly mage scrunched.



“The so called genius can’t even understand this? I made it really easy to understand and then explained it..... Hum!”

“No, it’s not that. I don’t understand the current situation at all. Why are you teaching me? Shouldn’t it be Mr. Filder? Also, why are you teaching me the magic theories? Haven’t you heard that I’m a player?”

The situation was just ridiculous to Vulcan.

By the time Vulcan regained consciousness from the storm of enlightenment, the magic attacks that surrounded him and the skeleton king exuding deadly force were no more.

Instead, there were six people, including Filder, staring at Vulcan.

They were extraordinary people in distinctive clothes.

They were staring at Vulcan, as if they were trying to drill a hole through Vulcan with their gazes, which made him extremely uncomfortable.

Vulcan asked Filder for an explanation. Filder stepped forward and looked straight into Vulcan’s eyes.

Just about when it looked like Filder was going to say that the

training detail has changed yet again, instead an old man dressed as if he is advertising to say 'I'm a mage' grabbed him, and before long, the place had changed to this artificial cave.

It had been an hour already since the lecture on basic magic theory started. There were too many unanswered questions to be listening to this any further.

“What is it? Filder didn't explain everything to you?”

“He was about to, but you dragged me here before Mr. Filder could speak.”

“What! Then why didn't you say so until now? Are you making a fool out of me!”

“I was going to tell you, but then you said to shut up and listen for just one hour. Do you not remember?”

“What? I did? HulHulHul..... My bad, despite my age I'm still impatient.”

‘Or you are going senile?’

Berenere looked about as lifeless as mummies that Vulcan saw in PBS and education channels, and that made Vulcan unable to hide his suspicions and doubts about the old man.

Berenere didn't care. Instead, he stared at empty air and mumbled something. It appeared he was trying to think of something to say, but it also looked as if a ghost possessed Berenere, and that gave Vulcan the creeps.

Finally, finishing his thoughts, Berenere spoke toward Vulcan.

“You are a genius.”

“?”

Vulcan sat with a face that screamed ‘Now what is this nonsense,’ which was what he was thinking. However, Berenere looked at Vulcan with an extremely serious face.

Berenere lifted his dried-up little twig like hand and pointed at Vulcan; then he continued.

“Do you have assholes in places of ear-holes? Say something.”

“No, why such harsh words..... I'm just caught off guard, that's all.”

In fact, Vulcan was so taken by surprise that he couldn't think for a while.

“What's there to be surprised about. Didn't people call you a genius all the time in the world you use to live in?”

“In that dimension, yes... but still, isn’t everyone that comes to this place a genius by default? It’s not like that’s anything special here. Also, as for me, it is not that I am a genius, but instead, I have the power of a player called SYSTEM, which is like a cheat ability, and I’m getting help from it a lot. It’s all power of the SYSTEM. By chance, you don’t know about this?”

“Of course I know about it. Those lazy asses. Those bunch have the talent the size of a rat’s ass, yet they don’t even train properly, and they always go on treasure hunting to look for good skills or weapons. At first, I thought you are just like them..... KULKULKUL KUAPKUAPGUP.”

Berenere laughed hard almost to the point he was going to die from running out of breath, then he fixed his gaze toward Vulcan.

“What do you think your rank is right now?”

“.....Level 103, by the standard here, that’s about the bare minimum for the Third-Rate ranking.”

“Wrong. Right now, there would be nothing wrong with calling you a Second-Rate.”

Vulcan snorted after hearing Berenere.

“That can’t be, elder. It appears you don’t know much about players. We players can assess people’s strength accurately.

Compared to how I was two month ago, there is hardly anything that changed.....”

“I get that the level is about same. I’m talking about what you call the masteries. You are not aware because you don’t know any players around here, but I do. Players with your kind of Thunder God mastery usually have levels of 200 or above. It’s a kind of mastery that may or may not be possible even with ten years of repeated training. HULHUL.”

“.....”

“It looks like you are still not getting it..... Hum.”

Berenere scratched his back with his staff on his right hand.

“You used to be, what was that..... Max Level, Level 99? How long did it take to get there?”

“..... about 5 years?”

“Others usually take 30 years to get there. Even with that, compared to you, their masteries are substantially lower. What do you think is the cause of the difference?”

Now even Vulcan couldn’t do anything but to acknowledge it.

Vulcan asked Berenere with a sincere face.

“Because..... I am a genius?”

“KULKULKULKUL.”

Like a dark mage scheming an evil plot, Berenere laughed ominously. His voice was full of laughter.

“You say such a boastful thing without any reservation.”

“That’s... you kept telling me I’m a genius...”

“Is proclaiming it yourself the same as others telling you so?  
KULKULKUL.”

“Now, just what....”

“Anyway, enough about this.”

‘Ugh... this guy really gets on my .....’

It spoiled Vulcan’s mood to see Berenere flipping between compliments and belittlement.

Vulcan complained inside without letting it be shown and continued tuning to Berenere.

“But, isn’t it odd? From what I know, the only way for a player to increase mastery is repeated training, but as I said earlier, the difference between you and other ordinary players are big enough to be very obvious at his point. According to Filder, you got to where you are through harsh training unlike other lazy bums, but even that cannot explain this difference.”

“.....”

“You can understand the question just by looking at the answer.”

Vulcan, confused, stared at Berenere.

“What do you mean by that? Explain it in a way that makes sense.....”

“Just stay put! An elder is talking!”

‘You lousy old man!’

Vulcan cringed.

“Take a moderately complicated math problem for instance. Most people seek a solution method before solving the problem. They understand the intent of the question first, formulate solution steps and find the answer. Building upon this, smart ones are able to go further and solve different but applicable problems of similar nature, and in some cases, they are able to find clues as to how to solve a more difficult problem. As people solve problems

this way, over time, they gain problem solving skills and reach new heights.”

Berenere took a breather and continued.

“On the other hand, players solve problems by asking for the answers directly. The smartypants called SYSTEM or whatever always knows and tells you the answers, so why put any effort into understanding the problem? With the SYSTEM constantly spoon-feeding the answers, players don’t learn anything. Instead they just repeat skill names like parrots. There is no progress. They look pathetic yelling ‘Ice Missile!’ just to cast such a low level magic. It’s really tacky! The true power of magic doesn’t require such.”

Vulcan avoided eye contact. He felt uncomfortable because it felt like Berenere was talking about him.

“KULKUL, I wasn’t talking about you specifically, so take it easy. Of course, you do have some bad habits of players. Nobody in the world would study hard when answers to test questions always just appear in front of them.”

“.....”

“Still, like I said earlier, even the likes of you can have differences. You understand the question just by looking at the answer. Just by looking at the answer, you understand the question and have a rough guess on how to solve it to get to the answer. It is no surprise that your mastery increases faster than other players that only memorize answers to specific questions.”



Vulcan felt unexplained itch listening to Berenere.

It was a feeling of excitement, but at the same time, he felt embarrassed. Before those feelings engulfed Vulcan, he tossed a quick question.

“If what you are saying is true, then you are teaching me the basic magic because.....”

“You have a talent where you can understand about half of the problem just by looking at the answer. You were able to do that even without a teacher to show you. What would happen if you were taught properly by a teacher on the basics? In addition, you have the power of SYSTEM which tells you the answers in critical moments. It is no wonder Filder has high hopes for you. HULHULHUL.”

Vulcan felt a burning sensation filling up his chest.

It wasn't because he was acknowledged by Filder and Berenere, the two extremely powerful beings with incalculable levels.

It was acknowledgement of not Vulcan the player, but Vulcan the human being.

This was the first time Vulcan was assessed on the merit of being a person alone, without the aid of SYSTEM included in the consideration.

Vulcan's strength, rapid growth speed and superior fighting tactics were all acquired through his hard work. Vulcan took pride in having had put in more sweat and hard work than anyone in past five years, and in fact he didn't see anybody else around that worked as hard as him.

However, he felt uncomfortable and doubted himself because in corner of his mind, he always wondered if he achieved it all through the power of SYSTEM, not by his own.

This was why he could not stand proud whenever anyone gazed upon him with compliment, envy or jealousy.

Vulcan always felt a little lacking in confidence and pride.

However, now all those feelings of insecurities flew away at an instant, all because of a few words from Berenere, an old man standing over there scratching his thigh with his staff.

“Please.....”

Vulcan decided to trust Filder and Berenere.

Vulcan had already been following Filder's training to the letters, but he now felt that he could follow their guidance with an even greater sense of trust.

“Train me. Please take a good care of me from now on. Elder.”

Vulcan stood up and gave Berenere a proper 90 degrees angle bow.

Berenere was not used to bows because he came from a different culture, but he could certainly feel the sincerity coming from Vulcan.

“KULKUL, it has been a lousy year and now I got an apprentice.”

Berenere gazed upon Vulcan with approval.

\*\*\*

On a training ground the size of two soccer fields, Berenere’s phlegm-filled voice echoed.

“Hey you numbskull! What’s taking you so long! Can’t you understand this!”

‘Fuck! I thought you said I was a genius!’

Vulcan complained inside.

# Chapter 14 - When Talent And Cheat Codes Meet (3)

---

Half a year had passed since Vulcan started learning magic from Berenere, a dark mage and necromancer.

It was true when Berenere said Vulcan is a genius. In this short amount of time, Vulcan mastered all of the basic magic fundamentals that Berenere organized for him.

Now Vulcan was training on high-level lightning and fire magic.

Through training, Vulcan completely mastered basic magic such as explosion and haste and also mid-level magic such as the Infinite Flame Sphere. However, the ones that were considered the main skills such as Thunder God's Strike, Thunder God's Might and Super-Heated Inferno could still only be activated with the help of the SYSTEM.

Vulcan still had difficulties and lacked the training to use high-level magic the way traditional mages do.

Berenere always complained about the rate which Vulcan learned magic.

Although Vulcan thought he was adapting to magic at an incredible pace, complaints were still endlessly being spewed out from Berenere's mouth.

“You rascal! You should learn to stand your ground! You need to hold out there if you want to bring out the true power!”

“You are getting garbage mixed into the end result because you are not focusing when concentrating mana! If you call that lump of fire a Hellfire, then a little kid playing with matches should be called a Firestorm!”

“KULKULKUL, yeah that’s just great, just keep on going like that why don’t you. You keep on going like this, and you won’t be able to clear Act 1 even after one hundred years.”

Whenever Vulcan fell short of Berenere’s expectations or appeared to be losing focus, he criticized Vulcan. The psychological attacks were making Vulcan cringe big time and curse inside.

However, regardless of above, Berenere did not stop whipping Vulcan with his words.

Actually, unlike how he was acting, Berenere was surprised about how fast Vulcan was growing.

He figured the synergy of combining the power of player with a genius would be incredible, but this felt like it was above expectations.

Even the likes of geniuses were still people and ran into limits.

Rapid progress such as realizing ten things from a single lesson

was for basic and middle levels. Once someone approaches the heights of once-in-a-lifetime kind, the sky-piercing rapid progress should be wearing off.

And when someone reaches the absolute peak level, the kind that happens once in a while in an era, even that worn-down growth rate comes to a complete stop.

Considering those problems, ones that at least progresses at a turtle's pace while getting to hold enlightenment once in a blue moon could be considered the blessed ones.

There were so many people that ended up saying 'I wanted to shatter the ceiling.....' in their dying breath after living their entire lives without any clues.

However, such did not apply to Vulcan.

Unlike other geniuses that spend their entire life searching aimlessly for the 'answer,' Vulcan was already in possession of the perfect answer.

In addition, although it wasn't through proper understanding of the basis, Vulcan had, although incomplete, pretty good 'guesses' for basis of skills. Combined with Berenere's top-notch guidance, Vulcan's growth rate accelerated beyond imagination.

'It took me 10 years to get this far... HULHUL.'

Berenere considered even the greatest geniuses of a century to be beneath his feet. Vulcan was completing something that took Berenere, the one that possesses devilish talents, 10 years to do. And Vulcan was doing this while also doing swordmanship training on the side!

“You rascal! We are showing you the answer-sheet and even giving you explanations, yet this is the best you can do!? I completed this in 100 days without a teacher!”

Although Berenere was saying that, he was hiding just how impressed he was with Vulcan.

Whenever Vulcan showed fiend-like growth-rate in masteries, Berenere scolded Vulcan to say he shouldn't get cocky. Berenere also tried hard to hide his face when it was filled with awe.

‘When it comes to him, it looks like drilling him is the most efficient method! KULKUL.....’

Berenere saw how Filder trained Vulcan during the early days, which was mostly having Vulcan roll on the ground and fight with his life on the line. This Spartan style grunt-works by Filder, which treated Vulcan like a maggot in a military training camp, made Berenere more certain about the direction of his training.

Berenere figured that Vulcan is the kind that would train hard by himself when left alone, but train even harder when pushed and nagged on for the effect. In other words, an oddball that does better the harsher he is treated.

Those conjectures of Berenere were right to some extent.

“Hellfire!”

WHARURURURURUK.

“Ku....uk, I succeeded.”

‘Already!’

“Hum. Well that’s nothing. Also, it is not a true success until you can do it without speaking. Work harder!”

“Elder, you are actually impressed right?”

“No way! Stop saying non-sense and go back to practicing!”

Vulcan smiled and stared at Berenere. It was to say that he knows.

“Hum.”

Berenere felt a chill flowing down on his back.

\*\*\*



Unlike Berenere's magic training, the swordsmanship training had substantially more of the schedule dedicated to sparring.

Over 90 percent of the time was spent on harsh sparring, and the training ended with supplementary explanations and questions-and-answers on mistakes.

“Honestly, you don't have any peculiar talents for sword or staff techniques.”

Said a man who was gigantic enough to be believed if he claimed he was a troll or ogre.

It was after two hours of intense sparring, but he didn't break a sweat and appeared to be comfortable. On the other hand, in front of the giant man was Vulcan, sitting exhausted and completely out of breathe.

“Ah of course, I'm saying you are ordinary in comparison to the residents of Asgard, not that you are average by any other standards. However, compared to other swordsmen that use energy blade techniques as the basis, your level of sword techniques can only be useful as supplementary skills for your magic.”

Even Vulcan agreed on this part.

Since getting past level 50, Vulcan started to consider himself

more of a mage than a swordsman.

Sword techniques were just an aid to use magic more efficiently, not the main combat measures.

However, Vulcan could not just accept his comments. His pride was not allowing it.

“Although it is not enough to be a good swordsman, I believe it is enough for becoming a good magic swordsman.”

“Of course. In fact, you could become a great swordsman if you train hard. However, what you want is becoming stronger, not necessarily a great swordsman. It’s not like you are focused on blade techniques alone. What I’m saying is, there is no need for you to do well on everything that has to do with blades.”

Said the giant man who was leisurely swinging around a gigantic sword that ordinary people would not even be able to lift.

“Based on your combat style and affinity toward magic, ‘defensive sword techniques’ are not right for you. From now on, I will focus on teaching you just the ‘thrust’ and ‘slash’ attack techniques. When you need to block the opponent’s attack..... Hum... Just use magic to block or avoid. Or just don’t allow the situation to happen in the first place. And actually, I always have thought that when it comes to defense, magic is far superior to blades. Uh, do not tell Folken that I said this, ok? He might get really mad at me, haha.”

“He is not my teacher, and I have no reason to meet him anyway.”

“After all of your trainings are over, you probably will be meeting him a lot.”

“If that’s going to happen, I think it won’t be too late to think about it when the time comes.”

“Haha, you are right about that.”

Logweed the giant laughed innocently.

[Logweed, the Leader of Adventurers Alliance]

[??Lv]

‘Just when am I going to get to know these people’s levels?’

Vulcan was very curious about the level of Logweed.

\*\*\*

Ever since Berenere the general store owner and Logweed the leader of Adventurers Alliance started to train Vulcan, the time

spent learning from Filder decreased substantially.

In fact, just the two were enough.

One was a grand master in magic, and the other was considered as one of the twin-mountains along with Folken in blade and staff techniques.

The time spent learning from Filder decreased naturally as Vulcan trained under the two. There weren't much to train with him other than asking some questions about enlightenment or something Vulcan didn't want to ask Berenere who acts up a lot.

Instead, Filder changed his direction to providing Vulcan with information regarding things other than training.

Important information related to Asgard, useful tips, newly formed factions, and etc., the contents were far more detailed than the little booklet that he gave Vulcan in the beginning.

“So should I be most cautious about the demigods and those with dragon lineage?”

“Not necessarily. Overall, those two groups of people are most certainly the most powerful of all, but in the end there are other individuals who are just as powerful but belong to other groups. In addition, when it comes to demigods, they are here to prove themselves worthy of becoming true gods, so they wouldn't do anything malicious or dishonorable. As for those with dragon

lineage, they may pick fights due to their strong pride, but as long as you don't start the fight, you don't have to worry about having troubles with them.”

“Still, they are amazing. To think that these people are powerful enough to clear Act 1 easily right away when they first arrived on Asgard.....”

“They should be able to do at least that much to have things like ‘god’ or ‘dragon’ in their clan title, don't you think?”

Filder occasionally told Vulcan about clans that he might run into once he reaches Act 2.

Because Vulcan never saw other clans besides humans in Beloong city, information about these other clans intrigued him greatly.

They were the people that came to Asgard while being in possession of immense power already. To Vulcan, story about such people were shocking.

After all, they were strong enough to clear Act 1 right away and go straight to Act 2 from the start.

‘If that's the case, just what are their levels? A minimum of 500 or above?’

Even for those with level 400, which are considered grand masters by the Beloong city's standard, defeating the boss monster

in Act 1 was still too much to handle, so it was difficult for Vulcan to even imagine how powerful these people must be.

Vulcan thought they must be so powerful that he should be sorry for even trying to compare himself to them.

Still, Vulcan did not think he would be weaker than them throughout his entire life.

Vulcan spent half of a year training hard, and through his blood and sweat, he became certain of his talent and tenacity.

He felt confident that he could beat even the demigods and dragon clan if he was just given enough time.

‘Wait, but for what purpose am I listening to these kind of things?’

Vulcan suddenly came to his senses and said to Filder.

“But you don’t need to explain to me about Act 2. I am planning on just clearing Act 1 and return to my home world. So let’s move on to a different topic, something that would be more helpful to me.”

Filder responded with a smile.

“You never know what may happen next in the world affairs,

don't you think? There will be times when knowing these may still come in handy. You never know. Maybe dragon clan will come to visit Beloong city? Or you might decide to challenge Act 2 to become stronger."

"That will never happen."

"Yes, still we don't know what could happen in the future. HUHUU."

Filder said in a way that more than meets the eye. Vulcan stared at Filder with eyes full of suspicions.

'What's wrong with these people nowadays.'

Filder's face looked as if he meant nothing by what he just said.

However, Vulcan felt that Filder is hoping for something from Vulcan.

It wasn't just Filder.

Occasionally, both Berenere and Logweed were looking at Vulcan with expectations. Also, people called Mereham, Folken and Heywood visited often just to see Vulcan.

It was strange that these people were coming to visit Vulcan in the first place.

They were each in charge of Beloong city's medical center, patrol and horse stables. It was odd that these people with busy lives were visiting a newbie's training grounds when they didn't appear to have any reason to.

‘It's..... almost as if they are trying to send me to Act 2.’

Even though they were Vulcan's ‘seniors’ who got to Asgard before he did and they were saying they just want to help a newbie adapt easier, amount of aid they showered Vulcan with were clearly excessive.

‘It's as if they were training me for not just Act 1, but to make sure I'll survive Act 2.’

Vulcan stared at Filder again.

Filder was still explaining things in sincere and whole-hearted manner.

‘Well, it is not that important.’

Regardless of the reason, Vulcan thought he should welcome any help in training.

If they want Vulcan to challenge Act 2, all he had to do was saying no.



And if Act 2 was not what they were intending him to do, then Vulcan just had to repay their good-will somehow as much as possible.

Vulcan's head cleared after making the options easier.

He got rid of all the miscellaneous thoughts and focused in Filder's words.

Vulcan grew day after day.

Years changed twice, and Vulcan's masteries in Lightening and Fire reached S levels.

Around this time, Dokgo Hoo and Vulcan's basic trainings came to conclusions.

# Chapter 15 - A Fraudulent Character (1)

Two years were a great length of time for them.

Their appearance did not change much, but internally, they achieved substantial growth. Also, they were effortlessly exuding confidence and majesty, which made them look bigger.

The strong faith in their own abilities made the two feel more confident.

Of course, their confidence wasn't the only thing that changed.

[Third-Rate Magic Swordsman Vulcan]

[117Lv]

[Passive Skill List]

\*Combat Mastery B -> S

\*Weapon Mastery B -> A

\*Defense Mastery C -> B

\*Evasion Mastery B -> S

.....

Fire Mastery B -> S

Lightning Mastery B -> S

Cold Mastery D -> C

Necromancy Mastery E -> C

[Ultimate Swordsman Dokgo Hoo]

[417Lv]

Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo now possessed stats incomparable to what they were two years ago.

In Vulcan's case, although his level wasn't vastly different from before due to not having had the chance to do much monster hunting, his masteries have sky-rocked beyond words. He now possessed four of S level mastery that even those with level 400 and above had a hard time acquiring one.

Effectively, Vulcan became a 'bug' character that possessed max level abilities despite his actual humble level.

Dokgo Hoo's growth was also astonishing.

In the beginning, he looked like a clumsy fool, but he displayed exceptional talent throughout the training, and it made an impression to Folken, the captain of patrol squad. Thanks to Folken's focused teaching, Dokgo Hoo showed growth not unlike Vulcan.

The two were both top talents among everyone that the six masters ever trained.

Next to Dokgo Hoo were Vulcan and Filder, and then Folken the captain of patrol squad standing along the side.

Filder and Folken could be considered as the ones responsible for over 90 percent of what Dokgo Hoo had become.

Dokgo Hoo was standing tall like a giant mountain, but he started to gradually bend his back.

Toward Filder and Folken, he got down on his knees and made a proper bow, lowering himself all the way to the ground. Standing back up, Dokgo Hoo said to his teachers,

"I know it will take more than a lifetime to repay you for your generosity. I will devote and commit myself to make sure to not bring shame to your good names!"

Filder looked at Dokgo Hoo with his peaceful smile as always.

On the other hand, Folken crossed his arms as if he was saying this was too embarrassing to hear. Folken said while cringing.

“You have been training with us by getting beat up everyday. Perhaps that did a number on your head? Would you like to spar one last time?”

“If that’s what my master wishes, then of course I should heed to it. I will get ready right away.”

“Oh my, you won’t even let me tell a joke.”

Watching Dokgo Hoo’s sincere attitude, which was unlike his usual self, made Folken unable to help himself but to laugh. Dokgo Hoo too laughed together.

“I won’t make a scene. Thank you both for all of your hard work.”

Dokgo Hoo paid his respect for Filder and Folken one more time, and then he looked at Vulcan.

His seriousness before hand was gone at an instance, and now his face was full of playful smile.

“Hey, apprentice brother!”

“Ha, just how long are you going to keep on calling me that?”

“Hahaha, we studied under same masters for how long now? If we are not apprentice brothers, then what are we? Are you going to call me big bro instead?”

“That’s not..... It’s fine. Let me call you big bro instead.”

“Uuhahaha, of course! You should consider it an honor! When I was in the country of Cho, there were several dozen that wanted to have me, Sir Dokgo Hoo, as their big brother!”

“Alright, alright, I got it.”

They rarely trained together, but they became pretty close through occasionally overlapping classes held by Filder and break times. Now the two were each the closest person that they knew in the Beloong city, so they became close enough that now they could exchange banters like these.

‘It is no wonder since there’s not that many people I know here.’

Still, Vulcan had no reason to keep his distance from Dokgo Hoo. Also, instead of fighting every time they meet, treating him well as the senior and maintaining a comfortable relationship was better after all.

“Well then, I will be taking my leave. I guess you will have to go to the newbie’s hunting ground to level up? I will establish a hunting ground and wait for you so hurry up and come! Hahaha, let’s have a drink together in the pub once in a while!”

Dokgo Hoo laughed out with a great satisfaction and then headed straight to north like an arrow released from the bow. Dust rose up along the path that he passed through.

Now that a loud, mid-aged man disappeared, the place was filled with emptiness. Vulcan kept quiet for a while, and then he said to Filder.

“Well then, I will be taking my leave as well. Please let Berenere and Logweed know where I’m headed as well.”

“Mr. Vulcan, to which direction are you planning on going?”

“For now, I was thinking about going to the east gate.”

The east gate direction was where monsters with relatively easy difficulty roamed.

“I think you can go straight to the Orc Colonies.”

“That would not be a problem, but it’s too crowded in that direction. I want to check the status of my body as well, so I want to go to an easier place for now.”

“Well, it wouldn’t matter where you go. I’m sure you will get to level 500 in no time.”

Vulcan smiled big to the point his teeth were showing.

“Of course. It’s needless to say.”

\*\*\*

Asgard had monsters of various difficulties for powerful beings to fight and grow from.

The fields were divided into east, west, south, and north, corresponding to level 100, 200, 300 and 400 monsters gathered together in each field. This way, people could go pick a training ground suitable for their levels.

The most popular field of them all was the west gate field where level 200 monsters roamed.

It was crowded because most of people from Powel and Murim went there to gain experiences.

Also, whenever people fell to Asgard, they lose their ways from the shock of seeing such high level practitioners or just lose confidence, but in the end, with their individual talents and the basic training from the six, they eventually achieve level 200



rapidly.

Even in cases where they refuse Filder's help, they still get help from other places, such as teachings from those from the Eastland or enlightenment from watching a duel between high-level practitioners. So in the end, they too reached level 200 without trouble.

Because of these reasons, the west gate field, where the 200 level monsters live, was always over-crowded with those seeking battle experiences, and there were quarrels over hunting grounds.

In extreme cases, there were fights between people even before running into any monsters.

Those were the reasons why Vulcan decided to go to the east gate instead.

'If I go there hoping for a faster level-up, I may end up wasting time instead. It is a better choice to go to the newbie's hunting ground.'

Because Vulcan is a player, his situation was different from those that came from other dimensions. His goal was not about getting battle experiences from fighting monsters.

He just wanted to kill monsters fast and level up.

There was no need for Vulcan to fight over who gets to slay the

high-level monster. He didn't want to bother with it.

‘I heard there's hardly anyone on the east gate, so I should be able to hunt indefinitely.’

Vulcan's walk toward east gate hastened.

\*\*\*

“HUAAAAAAMMMM~”

Anderson yawned with his mouth open wide and looked around. There he saw six other men just lying on the ground without a care, just like himself.

Other than them, there was nothing else around, not even an ant.

Anderson cleaned up eye-boogers and picked his nose, and then he laid back down on the ground.

“Hey you un-tidy rascal, stop that.”

“Mind your own business.”

“Do not touch me with that hand later. Or you'll be dead meat for real.”

“Do as you wish. Oh man, is anybody going to show up.”

Anderson complained while lying down.

They were waiting in front of the Goblin dungeon for two hours without doing anything. They were waiting for people. It was because they were gathering party members to enter the dungeon.

The Goblin dungeon had monsters with average level of 120, but occasionally the place also had elite monsters with level 150 or above roaming about. Also, the boss was Puhuturu, a level 200 devil goblin.

On the other hand, the seven gathered in front of the dungeon had the average level of 130. Although the number on paper made it sound like they should be able to enter the dungeon without a need for any worries, they were still not confident.

‘Asgard monsters are way too strong for the indicated levels.....’

The seven players shared the same thoughts.

In their own worlds, the victory was a certainty if they fought a monster with the same level as themselves, and occasionally, they could even fight and win against foes with higher levels. However, in Asgard, it was a different story.

They had to have 5 level or more on top of the monsters’ levels to fight them. The monsters in Asgard were that strong.

These monsters weren't just running around relying on their raw strength alone. Fighting them felt like facing well-trained soldiers.

Moreover, the Goblin dungeon's monsters always moved about in groups of five or more, so it was no wonder why going in there with just seven players made them feel afraid.

"Ah, only if someone from Murim or Powel showed up."

"Retard, why would those guys come here? They would be done with getting to level 200 and go running around in the Orc Colony instead."

"No, there could be someone with level 150 who has not yet adapted to this place yet."

"I haven't seen any rascal like that in 8 years. Did you know that?"

"Hey, someone's coming."

The seven's heads all turned toward the person that showed up. Everyone scanned the abilities like a habit, and their faces filled with disappointments.

"God damn it, a super newbie again."

“It’s a new face. It looks like it hasn’t been long since he got to Asgard.”

“He looks young. What if he acts up after we let him join the party?”

“Ah, if that happens then that’s really going to fuck up everything.”

They were shaking in fear of anxious thoughts.

Players that just arrived to Asgard, and especially the young ones, had tendencies for narcissism.

This was because in their previous dimensions, they had all the attention and popularity from the people in addition to riches and honors, so they all had twisted personalities.

They think they are always right, and they think they can level up fast and bring everyone to below his feet if they have enough time. They were the kind that suffered from these two symptoms.

Actually, the seven players gathered here suffered from similar problems before, but they were rectified by senior players’ harsh treatments.

“Ah, now what? Maybe we should at least include him too?”

“Ah, I don’t feel comfortable with that.”

“Still, at least he is not level 99. Looks like he hunted vagrant goblins and gained experiences.”

“Yeah, and it is too much to wait around any longer for more people.”

“I’ll go talk to him.”

Anderson got up slowly and approached Vulcan with a smile.

“Excuse me, but you are a player, aren’t you?”

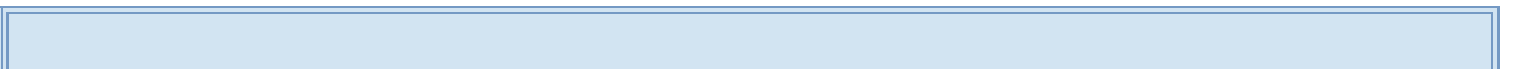
“Yes, that’s right.”

“Haha, I knew it. I am a player as well.”

“Ah, I see.”

“It looks like you are new here. Would you like to go hunt with us as a party? We are all veterans with years of experience in hunting. We will be able to help you.”

Vulcan turned to see the other players behind Anderson.



[Third-Rate Warrior Anderson]

[133Lv]

[Third-Rate Mage Jale]

[129Lv]

.....

[Third-Rate Archer Ruko]

[124Lv]

Vulcan saw that they all had similar low levels and cringed.

“Aren’t monsters here level 120 on average? You have so many people gathered here already, so why aren’t you going in?”

“Haha, perhaps you didn’t know about this. Occasionally, there are level 150 monsters. Besides, these monsters are level 120 only on paper. In reality, they are much.....”

“Please hold on a minute.”

Vulcan's interruption spoiled Anderson's mood. It even showed on his face a little.

Vulcan realized this, but he didn't mind and continued.

"Does that mean that if I don't enter your party, you won't be interested in going in?"

"What? Are you not going to join us?"

"I will decide after hearing your answer first."

"It is a little dangerous to go in with just seven people..... so we were thinking we should wait another 30 minutes once you join us."

"Oh I see..... I am sorry, but I will go hunt by myself."

"What?"

Vulcan walked past Anderson who was giving him a blank stare. Vulcan appeared to be in hurry, but he said to the others,

"When we get a chance next time, let's go in together."

'I have to do everything before those people come in!'



Actually, Vulcan was in a big hurry.

He was full of anticipations because it had been three years since he did a proper hunting. Now this was a golden opportunity for him to have a monopoly on the hunting ground. To Vulcan, he felt like even using proper etiquette was a waste of time.

Vulcan quickly disappeared into the cave.

“Oh, my.”

Anderson said to express his concerns as he watched Vulcan disappearing into the cave.

“Looks like we will be cleaning up yet another corpse today.”

“There aren’t many players out there as it is, and ones that come to Asgard dies right away like a clock work..... man.”

“Hey, still it is better for that guy to just die fast. He still thinks he is a legendary warrior.”

“Ah, so how long do we have to wait again then.....”

The players’ complaints continued endlessly.

Anderson sat back down, looking disappointed.

‘If he comes out wounded, we should fix him up at least.’

These players could never even dream of successfully hunting alone.

# Chapter 16 - A Fraudulent Character (2)

---

BOOM! KUABOOM!

KARURUK!

Inside of goblin cave filled with sounds of explosion and cries. The goblins in the cave had been leading peaceful life in here because there was hardly anyone coming by. Complacent with their life style, the goblins panicked as they faced the invasion by Vulcan.

BOOM! KUABOOM!

[Level Up!]

“As I thought, my level is rising up faster because it is so low.”

Vulcan hummed a song as he slaughtered everything in the cave. Hellfire poured out from his left hand to attack goblins.

-KURUK..... KUK.

The death toll was mounting up in midst of endless storm of flame magic.

Goblins came at Vulcan, all wielding their own weapons and crimson blood aura blades, but they were no match for him. Most of goblins got shot down by the Hellfire before being able to move even a few step. As for others that managed to come in close, their lives were extinguished by the pure lightning blade in Vulcan's right hand.

Even with goblin clan's legacy protective energy blade that was passed down for generations, goblins were helpless against Vulcan. By the destructive power far outclassing their own, goblins were falling in mass numbers.

-KURUK! KUKKEKEK!

“Oh, this one is level 150.”

[Goblin Patrol Captain Pakumu]

[150Lv]

\*One of goblin clan's elite monsters that appear after many of ordinary goblin warriors had been slain. Becomes more aggressive with damage taken.

Pakumu's level was higher than ordinary goblins by 30 levels.

However, in Vulcan's eyes, even Pakumu looked about more of

the same to other ordinary goblins.

“Thunder God’s Might.”

Surrounded by lightning sparks, Vulcan charged in head on toward goblin patrol captain Pakumu. It was a powerful dash showing not even an ounce of hesitation, and at its tip was the pure lightning blade – holding its place with its sharpness.

KUAAANG!

[Level Up!]

Vulcan just blew up Pakumu, but he still had momentum from his charge attack, hence he was able to stop only after making a few more steps past the target.

The blood streams from Pakumu’s body evaporated as they came in contact with lightning sparks surrounding Vulcan, and they resulted in unpleasant stench. Vulcan smiled in joy, turned around and looked at the remaining goblins.

Ku... kuruk.

Chock-full of fear, goblin patrols ran away in all directions. Of course, Vulcan wasn’t going to just sit and watch.

“Where are you all going, you bastards.”

Vulcan’s magic sprayed out flames.

\*\*\*

[Ordinary Accessory – Goblin’s Teeth Necklace]

[Level Limit: 70Lv]

[Ordinary Weapon – Patrol’s Worn-out Axe]

[Level Limit: 105Lv]

.....

[High Quality Armor – Patrol Captain’s Leggings]

[Level Limit: 130Lv]

Defense +80

Durability 22/45

Movement Speed Increases by 5% While Attacking

\*The legging belonging to patrol captain Pakumu, the one in charge of Goblin clan's security. Dangerous spikes becoming of Pakumu's aggressiveness are nailed in.

“This is great. Compared to items in Rubel continent, this one's defensive ability is at another level.”

Looking happy like a kid in a candy store, Vulcan murmured as he replaced his worn out equipments.

Inside of the cave was in shambles from the aftermath of numerous powerful blade strikes and magic.

In its middle, Vulcan was organizing the spoils he gathered up to now.

“This one is below average, that one is also below average, this one..... I don't know what this is. I wonder if Mr. Jake would know?”

Blade, armor, herbs and even currencies accepted in Beloong city, the items were piling up like a mountain. It was unbelievable that Vulcan accumulated all this just in three hours of hunting.

Of course, items weren't the only thing that Vulcan gained in a mass quantity.

[Third-Rate Magic Swordsman Vulcan]

[131Lv]

Vulcan's level was 117 before he entered the dungeon, so he leveled up 14 times.

It was no surprises with all things considered.

The specs that Vulcan currently had, other than the level, easily exceeded that of zeniths. When it came to those that could be considered zeniths in Asgard, possessing level of 400 or above was one of the ways to be qualified as a zenith. However, possessing S level abilities also counted among the qualifying traits.

Vulcan had S level abilities in combat, evasion, lightning and fire masteries, total of four.

Vulcan's passive skill masteries far exceeded that of even zeniths, making him an existence that belies his level. By this unconventional strength, Vulcan was able to mass exterminate Goblins and gain explosive level ups.



Ordinary 100 level players had to party up with several people to hunt goblins.

On the other hand, Vulcan managed to clean up the entire dungeon by himself. The difference in level gain was to be expected in this situation.

“I think that’s enough. I picked up all of the useful items I want.”

Vulcan stood up and took a look around himself.

The worn out 80-90 level equipments that served him for almost three years throughout the training were replaced with 100 level and above equipments. Vulcan felt refreshed.

Vulcan carefully distributed the stat points he obtained from level ups.

Thanks to the new equipments, the improvements in the stats were enhanced further, making Vulcan feel greatly satisfied.

“As for the boss..... 200 level was it? Whatever. I bet it’s going to be a piece of cake.”

Vulcan rounded up all of other miscellaneous junk items to the inventory, and he kicked open a door decorated with two human skulls.

\*\*\*

“Oh man, this is so boring and repetitive.”

“I might be way better off doing mastery gruntwork training under Filder.”

“Retard, no way.”

“I’m just saying. I wasn’t actually going to go. A prison is better than that.”

“Yeah. That’s not for a human being.”

The men with dirtied getup, as if they just returned from hunting, entered Beloong city through the east gate.

They were Anderson and the bunch, the people that were laughing at Vulcan’s idea of hunting by himself.

“Anyway, next time, let’s just go in even if we are a little short on number of people. Honestly, seven people are enough as long as the patrol captain doesn’t show up.”

“Yeah, if it looks like the patrol captain might appear soon, we just need to go outside for a while and come back.”

“Ah, really, hunting vagrant goblins are about as good as not doing it in the first place. If I had enough money for a drink, I would have called it a quit and came back a long time ago.”

The bunch gave up on entering goblin cave because nobody came around even though they waited for another hour after Vulcan entered.

They decided that instead of wasting time waiting, they might as well go hunt for vagrant goblins that appear occasionally on east field.

So off they went, but vagrant goblins were only level 90, and it took longer to find them than hunt them, making the monster hunting time-inefficient.

Also, the experiences from the hunt were shared by the spoons of seven people, so each of the party members only received ant's tear sized portions.

So in the end, the Anderson bunch returned to Baloong city with junk items and infinitesimal amount of experiences and currencies.

“Ah, really, if those two guys didn't give up on leveling up, we would have been stable.”

“I know. If we reached at least 200 level, we wouldn't be living like this, ignored by everyone.”

“What’s the point of thinking about the bastards that left? They said they will just live like that for the rest of their lives.”

“Man..... look at the pathetic state we are in.....”

Anderson used water magic to wash his entire body, and he looked up the sky. The sky with the sunset, which was just about to go away into the night, was quite a sight to behold. Anderson reminisced about his glorious past days.

‘Why did I beat the final quest..... I should have just enjoyed being the emperor. Ah, I want to go back..... Not to Earth, but the last dimension where I was the emperor.....’

Like that, Anderson was giving a blank stare into the distance, but then he saw something approaching from the horizon.

It looked like a little black dot, and it was forming dust clouds behind its path. The dot’s speed was so incredibly fast that the dot arrived to the front of the gate even before all of the dust clouds dissipated.

There stood an Asian young man with black hair and golden sparks surrounding his body. It was Vulcan.

“No way, that guy.....”

“Oh, I thought he would die in an instant, but he managed to come back alive.”

“Looks like he had it really rough in there. His entire body is stained in blood.”

“Yeah, to get out of there alive, it is difficult without getting hurt.”

The Anderson bunch talked about it as they observed Vulcan’s ragged appearance.

Although there weren’t much of kindness in their words, they were all at least expressing that they are glad Vulcan returned safely.

Even Anderson was welcoming Vulcan’s safe return. However, it wasn’t because someone’s safe return mattered to his mood.

“Hey, friends,”

“Uh?”

“I think it will be perfect if we had that guy in our party for hunting from now on. What do you think?”

“Oh, yes. Since he came back alive from there, he must have the basic abilities. Also, I bet the experience scared him straight now,

so I'm in."

"I'm in too."

"Me too."

Everyone responded favorably to Anderson's proposal.

These players were treated poorly by the others because of their low levels and lackluster talents, so the idea of gaining one more ally was a rare opportunity for them.

For these players, because there were more players giving up than joining, having even just one more ally was something to welcome and get excited about.

Anderson looked at Vulcan's appearance from top to bottom.

He noticed that some of Vulcan's items were changed, meaning Vulcan didn't just run away from the cave.

Anderson started to think that Vulcan's skills must not be so bad, and that got rid of the little bit of hesitation he had left.

Anderson smiled like a good man and approached Vulcan. As Anderson approached him, he unconsciously scanned Vulcan with the SYSTEM.

[Third-Rate Magic Swordsman Vulcan]

[147Lv]

“.....?”

Anderson’s steps toward Vulcan came to a sudden halt.

‘What? Did I read it wrong? Is there an error in the SYSTEM?’

Anderson disengaged the SYSTEM ability and tried scanning Vulcan again.

SYSTEM’s accurate assessment ability told Anderson about Vulcan’s current level once more.

[Third-Rate Magic Swordsman Vulcan]

[147Lv]

“.....?”

“What is it?”

“Ah.”

Before Anderson realized it, Vulcan was standing in front of him and staring at him.

Vulcan’s face was saying, ‘why are you staring at me.’

His look was also saying he was aware that Anderson scanned him.

“Ah, nothing, just that I am glad that you came back alive.....”

“Ah, that’s what it is. I misunderstood. I thought you were staring at me because you were trying to pick a fight with me.”

“No! That’s not why! I’m not that kind of person.”

“Ok. I have been running into a lot of strange old people in Asgard, so I was mistaken. Well then.”

Vulcan was just about to go through the east gate past Anderson.

Anderson was standing there with a blank face, but then he suddenly regained his mind and called Vulcan.

“Hey! Wait! I have something I want to ask you!”



Vulcan stopped. He only turned his head and looked at Anderson.

“What is it?”

“Nothing, it is just..... What I’m trying to ask is...”

“If you don’t hurry up, I’m going to get going. I am very busy.”

“Ah, Ok. It’s about your... your level.”

“What about my level?”

Vulcan’s gruff face made Anderson nervous.

Anderson was certain this was the same Vulcan he met in the morning, but he felt strongly that Vulcan was not someone to treat carelessly.

“That is..... You were, until the morning, you were level 117 right? But now you are level 147, so I was wondering.....”

“Yes, I was level 117 in the morning, and it is also correct that I am level 147 now. Is there a problem.....”

“No, nothing. Ah man, what I was trying to say isn’t.....”

“Ah, if you were going to ask me to hunt together..... I am sorry.”

Anderson was at loss for words.

He was confused and none of this made any sense to him, but in front of him, Vulcan was someone that gained 30 levels in just one day.

Anderson figured it is obvious that Vulcan would not want to be in his party.

However, Anderson had so many questions and expectations from Vulcan to just step aside now.

‘A player that gains 30 levels in just one day, I never even heard rumors about such a person!’

Anderson thought that this situation, being face to face with Vulcan, could bring incredible luck to himself.

Anderson gulped and asked a question toward Vulcan.

“That’s not it, but maybe..... how you leveled up..... can you give me a little bit of tip on that? Ah of course! I won’t ask for it for free. Your weapon, it looks like it is something you have been using since the time you were in your previous dimension. I will give you a nice weapon. You seem to be a blade user. Here, I will give you mine. It is a high quality blade with level 128 as the limit. Its attack

power is pretty good.”

Anderson sounded desperate.

Listening to Anderson’s desperate words made Vulcan cringe a little.

Vulcan’s face was that of someone agonizing over whether or not to tell Anderson about the reason behind Vulcan’s success. Anderson felt that Vulcan might tell him if he plead with Vulcan just a little more.

“Oh yes, it could be inconvenient to just have a long blade, so I will also give you my short sword as well. Here, these are 105 level short swords.....”

“No thanks. It’s fine.”

Vulcan raised his hand to stop Anderson and said,

“I’ll just tell you.”

“Thank... Thank you! I’ll make sure to return this favor when I find a good skill or item. So, what is the secret?”

“But it is really nothing special.”

“Oh no, you don’t need to be so modest. I am really, very grateful. Thank you.”

“.....”

Vulcan looked at Anderson with pity. Vulcan’s gaze locked on to Anderson.

Five, and ten seconds have passed, and when Anderson was just about to speak, Vulcan opened his mouth.

“Increase the mastery of either weapon techniques or magic to rank A or above, and then clear goblin dungeon from start to finish twice. By the time you make a round and come out of the dungeon, the monsters will be regenerated so you can make your rounds indefinitely. Well then, I’ll be going now.”

“.....”

Vulcan uttered those words and disappeared quickly.

Anderson was just standing there with a blank face again, and his friends came by.

“Hey, why are you standing there like that?”

“I can understand how you feel. I was also surprised after I scanned him. So, did you ask him how he leveled up?”

“By the looks of it, it seems like he left without telling you.”

“Of course he wouldn’t tell us. Even I would just leave.”

“No. He did tell me.”

After a long silence, Anderson finally spoke. They were all tossing all sorts of questions at Anderson, but now the bunch suddenly silenced themselves.

All six of them were staring at Anderson with gaze reflecting great expectations.

Anderson, with his face still showing signs of shock, explained to the bunch.

“He said it can be done if you increase the basic passive skill mastery to A rank.”

“.....”

The entire seven, including Anderson, have fallen silent from that moment.

## Chapter 17 - A Fraudulent Character (3)

---

The boss goblin's room was filled with creepy atmosphere.

The half rotten human corpses and a mountain of skulls were placed in disarray in front of the entrance as if they are for the purpose of decoration

It was such a cruel sight that ordinary people would have turned their heads away.

However, for Vulcan, whom have had seen it 20 times over, it was no longer evoking anything out of him.

‘I get rid of those corpses every time because they smell bad, but they are always here when I come. Do these things also regenerate along with the monsters?’

Vulcan thought about such trivial matters as he kicked open the boss goblin room's door.

KUANG!

KIRURUK? KIRUK!

Vulcan could see the same ones that he was growing tired of seeing for almost a week.

The boss goblin sat at the throne made of a gigantic monster's bones, and there were five other goblins in front of him, each wielding various weapons.

[Devil Goblin Puhuturu]

[200Lv]

\*The strongest goblin that rules over the goblin dungeon. He prides himself for surpassing the goblin race.

[Goblin Royal Guard]

[160Lv]

\*Elite goblin that guards the devil goblin. Stronger and more violent than an ordinary goblin.

The goblin royal guards just stared at Vulcan for a while, looking confused about the situation, but then they started making fearsome sounds. Their muscles became tight and tense as if they were ready to charge at Vulcan at any moment.

Of course, Vulcan wasn't going to just sit and let the goblins have the first attack.

“Fire Wall.”

KIRUK? KIRURURUK!

A wall of fire suddenly appeared and surrounded the goblins in a circle.

Flame reaching almost to the cave’s ceiling was closing in on the goblins, blocking their sight. Suffocating heat choked and pressured in the goblins inside the Fire Wall.

Even if Vulcan left things be, the goblins would have suffered substantial damages while trying to escape the flame, but Vulcan wasn’t intending to stop here.

“Fire Shower.”

A square shaped door burning red with flames appeared above the goblins and poured down rain of fire.

KIRUK KIRIK!

KUK.

[Experience points increased.]



[Experience points increased.]

[Experience points increased.]

The sounds of experience points rising were like music to Vulcan's ears.

However, the battle was not over yet.

KUHURRRNG!

With an incredible roar, loud enough to shake the flames of the Fire Wall, the devil goblin Puhuturu revealed himself from the flames.

Puhuturu's entire body was already burned all over from the Fire Shower. His facial expression, filled with pain and rage, told Vulcan just how much damage he had taken.

Puhuturu looked completely different, about as different as night and day, from just a moment ago when he was leisurely sitting in his throne.

However, the fearsome and violent fighting spirit exuding from his body was still the same.

The way Puhuturu looked right now clearly explained why he

was called the devil goblin.

With his left hand, Puhuturu dusted off the fire on his cloth and took out a battle-axe. Its murderously blue edge was layered over with bloodstain-colored energy blade.

This was no surprise considering all the monsters that Vulcan encountered in Asgard up to this point.

However, Vulcan knew what would happen if he allowed more time for Puhuturu.

‘No matter how I think about it, this is just too much.’

Vulcan thought about how it went when he hunted the devil goblin for the first time.

Even then, the devil goblin was no match for Vulcan. Back then, after single handedly defeating the royal guards, Vulcan decided to just lay back and observe the combat abilities the first boss monster in Asgard he ever encountered had to offer.

Puhuturu completely neglected defense and focused on energy blade technique, and then the unimaginable happened.

Even Vulcan, who thought he saw and experienced everything, was caught off guard by its destructive power.

‘He compressed the energy blade once more.....’

It was a highly concentrated energy blade that was produced by the compression of a high concentration energy blade once more. Vulcan never thought a mere goblin would be capable of such an incredible technique.

‘This is really a crazy world.’

Of course, Vulcan was not going to just sit and watch Puhuturu complete the technique, regardless of how amusing it was to watch. It appeared that Puhuturu did not perfect the technique yet to the level of it being combat ready, and he was taking a very long time.

Vulcan readied his new 150 level blade and swiftly charged toward Puhuturu. The distance between the two narrowed, and Vulcan could see Puhuturu’s eyes begging for more time.

“Thunder God’s Strike.”

[Experience points increased.]

[Level Up!]

This was the 20th time Vulcan sliced the devil goblin in half.

\*

Vulcan yawned and stretched as he exited the dungeon, but his relaxed attitude turned sore when he ran in to the faces he was sick of seeing for past five days at the dungeon entrance.

Of them all, the one Vulcan was most sick of seeing was approaching him with a shabby smile.

“Haha, you are getting faster and faster at making rounds through the dungeon!”

“You are truly incredible! I have never seen any player that can grow so fast! You are the first!”

“That’s what I’m saying. I can’t even imagine how amazing your skills must be.”

‘This is not because of some special skills. I achieved high masteries by working my ass off.’

Vulcan sighed inside and looked at the people who were busy praising him.

The middle-aged men with lit eyes full of expectations were staring at Vulcan.

Vulcan opened the inventory and took out all of the items from today's hunting.

URURURU.

Blades, axes, armors and etc., all sorts of equipments poured down to the ground.

“I roughly sorted all of the ones that I do not need, so please take them. Also, please stop with embarrassing compliments.”

“Ah, all these, I cannot thank you enough..... Thank you so much!”

“Thanks! I will return this favor when I make it big later!”

“There is no need for such. When you come across useful information, please tell me those instead.”

“Of course! Although we are low on levels, we know a lot!”

‘Yeah, that's surely something to boast about.’

Vulcan made a bitter smile as he watched the seven players.

Vulcan got mixed up with Anderson and the bunch since the day after Vulcan started hunting.

They have been waiting at the dungeon entrance and staring at Vulcan with expectations since.

They made Vulcan feel uncomfortable, but it wasn't like they were coming over to pick a fight, so Vulcan couldn't say anything to them. Vulcan just ignored them and continued hunting.

Anderson and the bunch started approaching Vulcan when he came out of the dungeon.

Whenever Vulcan came out of dungeon after he finished hunting, they showered him with compliments, saying he is amazing, great work, etc., and they even tried to wash Vulcan's equipments for him using water magic.

Vulcan started to feel suspicious of them because they were acting like managers caring for their talent, but Vulcan didn't refuse them, so similar situation repeated for two days.

After being subjected to constant compliments and care from them, Vulcan roughly figured out their motives and what they want.

“Misters, are you all... by chance... expecting me to help you with power leveling?”

The bunch avoided their eyes from Vulcan and twisted their bodies.

Their pretentious and age inappropriate behavior was making Vulcan want to throw up.

“I am not going to do that for you.”

Vulcan said in a coldly.

Vulcan was already like this since the days when he played video games in the past. When it came to clingy newbies, he always thought that he should cut them off immediately to avoid any pain in the butt.

Vulcan made no exception to these middle-aged men doing soaked-in-rain puppy look.

In order for Vulcan to return home, he had several hundred more levels to go. Vulcan had no time to spare for anyone.

Vulcan returned to the goblin dungeon without any rest, and Anderson and the bunch were left on the field.

However, their effort toward Vulcan did not end there.

They took care of Vulcan for three days without any reward.

Vulcan knew all along that they were doing it to get something out of him, so he had been refusing to reward them with anything

so far, but their care was too much even for Vulcan. To be precise, Vulcan was getting sick of their care.

Vulcan wished they pick a fight with him by saying things like ‘Now that you are at a high level, shouldn’t you be generous to low levels?’ or ‘We should cooperate! It’s not right to do well by yourself, don’t you think?’ but they never complained.

In fact, they were at a point where their faces merely said ‘We expect absolutely nothing in return from you,’ and there was not even a hint of disappointment in their expressions. Such were all erased long ago.

‘If they have time for this, why don’t they spend their effort on raising their masteries?’

Vulcan could not stand them anymore, so he made a proposal.

“I do not have time, and I don’t have responsibility to take care of you all either. Still, I can at least hand over items that are of no use for me.”

Anderson and the bunch jumped in all excited when Vulcan brought out the items he collected from hunting.

“But,”

“.....?”



“I will give them as reward for giving me information about Asgard that I do not know about yet. If you try to take the items without giving me anything.....”

Electrical sparks surrounded Vulcan’s body.

“You will have to fight me.”

Sounds of people gulping could be heard.

\*

Since that time, a strange symbiotic relationship between Vulcan and the Anderson bunch was formed.

From the Anderson bunch’s perspective, this was something to be welcomed greatly.

They were not able to level up because they didn’t have enough people in the party. Because they have been wasting time away while not being able to do anything, helping Vulcan in exchange for items was like a highly profitable side job for them.

Equipments that were not up to Vulcan’s rapidly rising level were handed down to the Anderson bunch, and thanks to this, their specs improved substantially.

Now the Anderson bunch were capable of hunting by themselves nearby the dungeon entrance, but they postponed hunting for the sake of Vulcan's expedient level up.

Vulcan was already at level 179, and he told the bunch that he will move on to other hunting grounds after becoming level 190, so the bunch only had to support Vulcan for a little while longer.

Also, Vulcan had nothing to complain about the arrangement.

The stool merchant Jake already told Vulcan that 100 level items almost never sell and it is not a loss for Vulcan even if he gave away everything except equipments that has the special attributes related to increasing training efficiencies.

Also, Vulcan was gaining pretty good information from giving away junk items, so he was starting to think that he made the right call to employ the Anderson bunch instead of tossing them aside.

“Ah, so Murim or Powel are like that.”

“That's right. At least ours follow the format of being transported here after beating the final quest so we can at least roughly figure out the situation, but for those people, can you imagine how confused they must have been? Haha.”

“I never thought about that. I figured they were here to become transcendent beings but the truth is that they too were just dragged here.....”

Vulcan got to hear the most common reason for people from Murim and Powel coming to Asgard.

They are martial artists with the goal of becoming transcendent being, yet they ended up in Asgard instead of World of Gods.

“Well, transcendent beings are like becoming a demi-god. I heard that once they clear the Act 1, they could wish to go to World of Gods.”

“Hum, that means instead of thinking that they were tricked, they can just consider their stay in Asgard as a part of the journey toward becoming transcendent beings.”

“You can look at it from that perspective..... sigh.”

Anderson sighed and continued.

“As for me, I’m not interested in becoming a transcendent being or returning home. I just want to go back to the world I was in before Asgard.....”

“Me too.....”

“Me too..... Ah, I wonder what my concubines are doing right now.....”

“I should have never went to beat the final quest..... If I have known that I would end up here, I wouldn’t have beaten it.....”

Vulcan looked at the Anderson bunch while telling them they are fools with his face.

They told Vulcan that they use to be a jobless loser, college entrance exam student, or someone who just started their adulthood in the society.

When they were like that in their original world, they suddenly got transported to new dimensions, received the power of SYSTEM, and lived in life of luxury until coming to Asgard. Even Vulcan could understand how they felt.

Vulcan woke up the Anderson bunch from falling into nostalgia.

“Now, please indulge in nostalgia when I am not around. Do you have any more useful info?”

“Useful info.....”

Anderson sat and thought about it for a while, beating his head with his hand once in a while.

“Ah right. By chance, do you know about ‘the player alliance’?”

“No. What is that?”

Realizing that Vulcan is completely unfamiliar with the subject, Anderson continued his explanation.

“You really don’t know about it. You said you trained under Filder right?”

“It has been about two weeks since I left.”

“That geezer work people to death but didn’t tell you something this important.”

‘But you guys are like this because you did not bother with his training.....’

Also, Filder gave Vulcan various information. It was just that most of them were about Act 2, which was a problem.

Vulcan chose not to say anything and looked at Anderson quietly. Anderson also steadily gazed upon Vulcan.

After a brief pause, Anderson continued, but with caution.

“Player alliance is..... a group formed by a son of a bitch.”

# Chapter 18 - Players Alliance (1)

---

The monsters in Asgard do not reproduce. Just like beings inside a computer game, they only had the desire to fight against humans, and they each re-spawned after a certain amount of time had passed after death.

The monsters in each gate had a specific range of levels, level 200 and below at the east gate, level 300 and below at the west gate, level 400 and below at the south gate, and level 500 and below at the north gate. Monsters with a specific range of levels appeared on each hunting ground, and the monsters could only be summoned in the designated areas.

Because of this, there were always people fighting over suitable hunting grounds with sufficient number of monsters.

Especially in the west gate's Orc Colony, there were a lot of Second-Rate martial artists and mages hunting in the area, and there were instances where some people died from quarrels over hunting grounds.

On the other hand, it was hard to see any people in areas where hardly any monsters appeared.

It was obvious why.

Nobody had a use for a hunting ground where hardly any monsters appeared. It was true for those from Powel or Murim who seek enlightenment from intense battle, and it was also true

for players who seek experience points from unlimited hunting.

However, an exception always exists.

Occasionally, there were those that sought after such places.

“Mana Absorption.”

“KUUK.”

The brown haired young man collapsed to his knees after feeling exhausted from having his mana taken from him by force. He was biting his lips as if he was trying to resist screaming in pain.

“Mana Absorption, Mana Absorption, Mana Absorption.”

“KU... KUAAAK!”

The young man finally screamed in pain after repeated theft of his mana.

The skill caster glanced at the unconscious man and gave an order to his subordinate.

“Clean this up. When he wakes up, tell him good job, give him a potion and send him on his way. Tell him to come back a week later.”

“Yes, I understand.”

Said the mountain of man over seven feet tall as he bowed.

“How many seconds are left?”

“Until regeneration, 11, 10, 9 seconds.”

“That’s perfect. Alright.”

The man brushed over his blood-like red hair with his left hand. He started to direct the mana, which he mass accumulated through Mana Absorption, into an energy sphere.

The sphere was already looking unstable and shaking, but now it was starting to make unsettling noise.

GUUUNG..... GUGUGUUUUNG

It appeared as if the magic was going to run out of control if this continued any further.

In this critical moment, a goat-headed monster wielding a halberd was summoned to the field.

BANG!



The energy sphere was shot toward the monster just before it was about to run out of control. The Hell Goat, who was just summoned and promptly attacked, tried to respond, but it was too late.

The energy sphere made a direct impact to the monster's upper body.

**PUSHUUK**

The impact made a very small noise, like a silenced gunfire sound effect from a movie, and punched a hole through the monster's heart. The monster's body fell apart to pieces and collapsed.

The magic's caster, Uruo, was smiling in satisfaction.

[Loner Hell Goat]

[433Lv]

\*Unlike other Hell Goats, which roams in a group of three, this one wanders around by itself. Appears on corner of northern hunting ground.

“I will be leveling up once I hunt one more.”

“We already prepared the next one for you. Hey you, over there!”

The giant yelled in a loud voice, and the man far left of the five people gathered on the side stood up.

“Yes, I’m here.”

“Try to hold on even though it is tough. You will be free after a week.”

“Yes, I understand.”

“Once you bring in five people, we will add you to the west gate party, so keep up the hard work.”

“Yes! I will continue to serve you with loyalty!”

“Don’t go losing your strength already. We need to wait an hour.”

Uruo looked behind himself and said,

“..... Looks like I will have to level up next time.”

Following Uruo, the giant also turned his head toward the same direction.

There was a man in dark colored martial artist cloth with a curved blade on his waist walking towards this direction.

The man said,

“Hey, so did you have some fun?”

“Yes, thank you for your care. We were able to hunt safely.”

The tone of Uruo’s voice was completely different from how he was toward his subordinates. Uruo asked politely to the man so he wouldn’t get on the man’s nerves.

“But..... Sir Lee JungYup, it is not time for your arrival yet. Did something happen?”

“Ah ah, it’s nothing. It’s just that training today isn’t working out well, and I suddenly felt craving for a beer. Looks like you guys just hunted something a moment ago, so why don’t we all go together to the pub? If you don’t want to, you guys can go back by yourself.”

“Oh you son of a bitch, you came early just for that reason.’

Of course, Uruo didn’t say that out loud. Instead he smiled and said,

“Oh of course not. How could we go all the way back to Beloong city by ourselves safely? It’s all thanks to you, Sir Lee JungYup.”

“That’s right. So today, let’s go back a little sooner.”

“Yes, thank you for always protecting us along the way.”

Uruo bowed. Lee JungYup whistled and took out his curved blade.

“All right then, let’s get going! Everyone, follow me~!”

The Uruo’s group followed behind Lee JungYup like baby ducks following the mother duck. The giant approached Uruo whom looked uncomfortable.

“This is disappointing, Sir.”

“Be quiet.”

Uruo pointed to Lee JungYup with his glance. Realizing his mistake, the giant used a skill.

“Private Conversation.”

“Private Conversation.”

“Ha.”

Lee JungYup laughed a little in response but didn't care. Uruo and the giant carried on their private conversation.

- Sir, isn't this too much? The promised schedule is three hours from now.....

- Shut the hell up you rascal.

- Still..... it is not like we asked him for free. We are paying him.

- The payment means nothing to him. He is just doing this for fun, so don't get on his nerve and make him change his mind, do you understand?

- ..... Yes, I understand.

The leader of Players Alliance, Uruo.

The second in command, Berkman.

The two were the ones with highest levels among all players, each possessing level 327 and 289.

They were indeed high levels, but they were still not enough to hunt in north gate area where monsters with minimum level of 401

roamed.

If it wasn't for Lee JungYup's projection, they would not have made it all the way to the corner of the north gate area alive.

It was because of Lee JungYup that they were able to get to their destination safely, and they were hunting high-level monsters by having the skill ready prior to encountering the monster.

The overall process was absolutely impossible without Lee JungYup's help. This was one of reasons why Uruo was being polite to him.

‘Besides, it is not like there is anything we can do about him.....’

[Zenith Swordsman Lee JungYup]

[493Lv]

In past three years, Lee JungYup was the practitioner with the fastest growth rate. From being a First-Rate, he reached the peak level of Zenith in a single breath. He was that powerful.

If Uruo picked a fight with Lee JungYup out of pride, that would have most likely only resulted in destruction of the Players Alliance.

- But Sir, I heard a strange rumor circling amongst players.

- What.

- They say there is a player who gained 60 levels in just one week.

- ..... Continue.

- I heard he makes rounds on the Goblin dungeon at an incredible pace, and he is not even in a party. Instead he hunts by himself. It appears he knows something we do not. Perhaps he possesses a hidden skill.”

- A hidden skill.....

A hidden skill.

Technically, there was no such thing in SYSTEM, but players referred special skills with incredible efficiency and destructive power as such. Uruo’s specialty, ‘Sphere of Massive Concentration,” counted amongst those called hidden skills.

Uruo licked the top of inside of his mouth. The news was quite interesting to him.

- So this guy, what’s his current level?

- I heard he is at about 180 now.

- Get some of the grunts to bring him to me. I will get the information out of him myself.

- Yes, I understand.

“Skill List.”

Uruo put on a creepy smile and looked at his skill list.

‘A hidden skill is a waste for lazy pigs.’

Uruo smiled thinking this will be delicious.

\*

“Oh, finally, you are level 190!”

“Congratulations. I have never seen anyone like you who can level up so fast!”

“Haha, thank you.”

Vulcan, who was a mess with goblin blood, said with a smile.



Anderson washed Vulcan's equipments with water magic and asked,

“So, you are going to skip the west gate and go straight to the south gate?”

“Yes, I think there will be too much fighting over hunting grounds in 200 level area..... Also, I checked out a little and think I can handle hunting in the south gate area.”

“Of course, after all, you were able to handle the Goblin dungeon by yourself when you were still below level 120.....”

Anderson paused as he realized the stark difference between himself and Vulcan.

Vulcan was watching Anderson who was taking a moment to think, and then Vulcan opened his inventory to pour out items.

**USUSUSUSUSU**

“These are my final gifts. Please use them well.”

“Oh no, so many of high level items.....”

“I won't be needing them after all.”

The seven middle-aged men were touched by Vulcan's generosity.

Anderson abruptly reached out and shook Vulcan's hand.

"Thank you, really, thank you so much."

".....I'm giving you these in return for information, so you don't need to thank me so much."

Vulcan was getting embarrassed, so he awkwardly accepted Anderson's gratitude.

When Vulcan was just about to turn and head back to Baloong city, Anderson said,

"You must remember what I told you."

"You mean the Players Alliance? I don't think I will be running into them."

Vulcan responded nonchalantly.

Anderson beat on his chest as if he was hurting from a fire in his chest. Anderson continued,

“I know you are incredible. I also know you won’t have problem leveling up unlike us. However, those guys are real bastards, rotten to the core. When they hear about your ridiculous level up speed, they will try to approach you in any way they can. The leaders in that group.....”

Anderson sighed big and continued,

“They are bastards who exploit low level players like blood-sucking vampires.”

“I don’t think I will need to be afraid of them even if I ran in to them.....”

If Vulcan recalled correctly, the leader of the Players Alliance was a little over level 300. With that kind of level, they were not a threat to Vulcan.

This was a conclusion made after observing other players.

The Anderson bunch were just like video game characters. Their movements were rigid and lacking in flexibility. Their individual skills were fast and strong, but that was about it.

They were moving like characters controlled by a keyboard and mouse, repeating unnatural evasion and attack movements. Vulcan could tell numerous gaps in their defense.

‘No matter how the fight goes down, there is no reason I would

lose.’

Vulcan expressed gratitude for Anderson’s concerns.

“Anyway, thanks for the advice. Also, please train for masteries too. Don’t just focus on getting experience points. If it is too hard, please go back to Mr. Filder and train. You should clear Act 1 and go back to your home-world.”

“Ugh, when it comes to that pub owner, no thanks. I still can’t look at him when I go there for a drink.”

“If you keep on only looking for easy ways, it will be hard getting to level 300.”

“Hahahaha! It’s all right! I only need to go over level 200. Once you get there, you can live in Beloong city without being treated like dirt!”

“..... Act 1, are you never going to beat it for the rest of your life?”

“Well, even if I go back now, my family is long dead..... The plan is to go back when I get sick of the life here. Hahaha.”

Watching Anderson laugh made Vulcan also laugh in disappointment.

‘Perhaps it is better for them to just give up now. It will ease their minds.’

Vulcan thought about how he would be doing if his talents were ordinary just like these people, but then he shook it off. It was a useless thought. Vulcan had no intent to just give up like them.

That was the most important thing.

Vulcan said his goodbye to Anderson and walked toward Beloong city.

\*

Vulcan was leisurely walking back, but he saw three people approaching.

‘Looks like they are going to the Goblin dungeon.’

They were 170 to 180 levels, so it looked like they were going to make rounds in the dungeon as a group.

Vulcan was just about to mind his own business and walk past them, but the three blocked his way.

Their faces were all blank as if they were wearing face masks.

Vulcan figured out that the men must be from the Players Alliance.

“..... Are you from the alliance?”

“Sun God’s Hand.”

“Clown’s Firework.”

“Five Elements Chi Technique.”

The strangers each initiated skills without replying to Vulcan’s question. Energies surrounded the men as they each activated their special techniques.

“Haha.”

Vulcan laughed in a low voice.

Vulcan had been getting along with everyone in town, Filder, Berenere, Logweed and even the Anderson bunch. It had been ages since Vulcan tasted another human being’s adversarial intent.

‘Looks like I forgot where I am.’

Vulcan was leading a rather peaceful life in Asgard in comparison to how things were in Rubel continent, and that made him forget

that this is Asgard, the land of Gods.

It was a dimension full of danger with beings possessing god-like powers gathered into one place.

“Thunder God’s Might.”

Vulcan smiled violently as he felt the power of lightning filling up inside his body.

Vulcan could see the three men looking caught off guard as they faced unexpected power displayed by Vulcan.

“Looks like you were underestimating me because of my 190 level.”

“.....”

Vulcan watched as the three stepped back in panic. Vulcan said in a violent voice as if he was chewing and spitting out the words,

“I will show you that level isn’t everything.”

## Chapter 19 - Players Alliance (2)

---

Five people were walking along a path located in the southern direction of the Beloong city. They appeared to be tired as if they were just returning from finishing a tough battle.

Miluwall, the man with a scar from a blade-cut on middle of his nose, said,

“Ugh, I feel this every time I come here, but the south gate is incredibly tough. Even if it is the south gate, why is it so different from others?”

“I know. We are all at mid 200 levels. It does not make sense that we are outmatched this much by the 300 level monsters.”

“Well, was anything here ever normal? Asgard’s monsters had always been stronger than their levels.”

“That’s true... still.”

Miluwall casually turned his head and looked at Uruo, the leader of Players Alliance.

“The boss hunts monsters with levels higher than him.”

“Hey, are we the same as the boss?”



“This runt is out of his mind. You can’t compare us to the boss.”

“I know. I know that. Still, I’m jealous. We are all players like him, but we have a hard time and sweat like pigs fighting monsters with same levels as us. Unlike us, the boss single handedly kills monsters with levels 20 – 30 higher than him.”

Miluwall was backing down in light of all the disagreements from his fellows raining down on him, but he still wasn’t going to let go of the topic.

The giant who was listening to his words in silence, Berkman, finally opened his mouth.

“If you are jealous, then shut your trap and at least go improve your masteries.”

“Ah, big bro, you already know what I think of that.”

“Since you have been ignoring that for several decades, you have no right to make such comments about the boss.”

As if Berkman was trying to show that he is not just all talk, his fists were constantly piercing through the air. He looked like he was marching forward and performing shadow boxing at the same time. Watching Berkamn, Miluwall said,

“No way, I have no talent for hard work, so it won’t work. Other people are mistaking it. Being able to keep on repeating something

you don't want to do, that counts as a talent. As for me, I don't have that, so I don't think it will work."

"Then shut up and do our chores."

"Yes, of course. I will be fully satisfied if I get a management position in the alliance."

Miluwall was about to break in to a big laughter to express that he really is thinking that way. In that moment,

BOOM!

An energy ball that Uruo was controlling exploded near top of Miluwall's head.

"....."

Miluwall gulped and turned his gaze toward Uruo.

He could see Uruo who had a very stern face as if he was wearing an iron mask.

"You still haven't lost your lazy attitude."

"....."

“If you are the man that managed to become the most powerful being in your past dimension, at least behave like one becoming of such a status.”

Uruo's eyes were showing suppressed but certain murderous intent.

At that moment, Miluwall came to a sudden realization that he made a mistake with his words.

‘Damn it. I totally knew laziness gets on the boss's nerves.....’

Lately, when it came to light banter, Uruo had not been keeping the minions in line. As of result, Miluwall spoke too freely. Miluwall could feel his lips burning in regrets.

If felt like something invisible took a hold on his heart.

‘Don't try to make excuses. I should just say I am sorry and ask for forgiveness.’

Feeling the pressure, Miluwall opened his mouth to respond to Uruo's comment.

“Yes, my apologi.....”

CHIGIGIGIGIC!

“KUUAK!”

A lightning bolt came out of nowhere and struck Miluwall on the back.

“Miluwall! It’s... It’s an ambush!”

Immediately, all four men turned their heads toward the direction of the lightning bolt’s origin. In the direction, there was,

THUMP... THUMP...

PAZIZIZIC!

There was a man approaching with a blade pouring out yellow sparks all over the place.

“That guy, it must be that runt.”

“It seems like it. His level is..... 190 is it?”

“Yes. But he appears to be far stronger than an ordinary level 190.”

“How did he know to come this way?”

“It looks like the minions failed on their operation to bring him

in.”

“Those boneheaded idiots.”

While Berkman and Uruo carried on their conversation, the man surrounded in lighting bolts continued his approach towards them.

Before long, he was already within less than a hundred feet.

Uruo was just staring at the man of lightning for a while, and then he said,

“You. Identify yourself.”

“Me?”

The man of lighting, Vulcan, raised his chin and said,

“I’m the person that came here to get the payment from you for your insolence.”

“For someone who is here to get payment for my insolence, your level appears to be too low.”

Two men wielding giant two-handed swords stepped forward. Vulcan checked their levels.

[Second-Rate Swordsman Turan]

[255Lv]

[Second-Rate Swordsman Huran]

[251Lv]

“Are you two brothers?”

“Yeah. How did you know?”

“Your names.”

“Ah, of course. Anyway, you don’t seem to have what it takes to get the payment from us for our insolence?”

“Since you guys are keep saying that, it means you did something that I should ask you to pay for.”

“Uh, that’s.....”

“Stop humoring him.”

Uruo said coldly.

“Just get him and drag him over here. We can have a conversation from there.”

“Yes, understood!”

Vulcan watched as the two brothers walked toward him step by step. Vulcan shouted,

“As for me, I rather have a conversation first then have a fight.”

“There won’t be any conversation for you.”

“You guys are the ones that picked fight with me first, yet you have no intentions to resolve any misunderstandings. Hey, aren’t you guys Players Alliance or whatever?”

“That’s right. You are picking a fight with us knowing that?”

“You are the ones that picked fight with me first. Are you stupid?”

“Oh you son of a bitch.....”

Of the two, the baldhead on the left was getting agitated the

most. Vulcan watched as he turned completely red to the top of his head from anger, and said,

“Calm down, Mr. Clean.”

“What! You little runt!”

“Hey you sons of bitches! Did you not hear me! I said cut the chitchat! Just get him and bring him here!”

BOOM!

A crater formed on the ground that Uruo stomped on hard.

Turan and Huran’s eyes shook.

“If you don’t have the smarts for it, then get it done with your brawns. I’ll give you three minutes, so bring him to his knees by then.”

Hearing Uruo’s commands, the baldhead stopped thinking and started speaking the skill commands.

“Heavenly Slaying Energy Blade! Come forth!”

The baldhead surrounded by black tinted energy blades, Turan, charged toward Vulcan.



With each step Turan took, the ground fell apart and broken stones flew away everywhere, clearly showing the violent intensity of Turan's technique.

‘But it is too simplistic.’

Vulcan had a little bit of expectations for Turan because he is a high level player, but witnessing his technique made Vulcan's face turn cold and stiff out of disappointment. Vulcan lightly sidestepped and dodged Turan who was charging toward him.

However, that was not the end of Turan's attack.

“Target Tracking!”

‘What!’

Vulcan was about to give a taste of his Hellfire to Turan who was just went past him. However, Turan suddenly changed direction in a way that completely defied the law of momentum, and Turan was coming at Vulcan. That made Vulcan gasped for air.

“Yeah! Sky Shattering Lone Sword!”

KUAAANG.

Of course, the attack was not a threat to Vulcan. He was caught

off guard by the physics-defying stunt pulled by Turan. If Vulcan was the kind that got hit by all of these tacky-named attacks, he would have never survived Logweed's training.

Vulcan retreated by taking back a few steps. Vulcan was just about to shoot lightning from his blade so Turan could not follow immediately, but then he felt the space compression just behind him.

It was Huran, who was just watching the battle until this point.

“Blink.”

With a quiet whisper-like voice, Blink was initiated.

In an instant, Huran closed the gap of a hundred feet and attempted to stab Vulcan with his giant sword. Vulcan jumped high to get away from the attack range of the two brothers.

The brothers were expecting Vulcan to fall back down, so they were taking stances in preparation, but they realized Vulcan was staying in the mid air. The brothers complained,

“What's this? He didn't even use any skill so why is he still floating?”

“Probably some item. This runt, there is a reason why he is stronger than his level.”

“Be careful from now on too. He might have more up his sleeves.”

‘My strength isn’t due to my equipments.’

Vulcan complained inside as he glared at the two, thinking,

‘What a bunch of idiots.’

Still, there was one thing that Vulcan could learn from them.

‘There is an advantage to fighting like a player.’

Even if it is something that is absolutely impossible for martial artists or mages, it was still possible with the power of a player’s skill. Players possessed abilities that could poke holes at the laws of physics or common sense in flow of offense and defense. Vulcan was very intrigued by this.

‘I trained for years in the traditional ways, and it looks like I became stiff in the way of my combat.’

Combat method of a player; it was worth investing some time and studying.

“Hey, are you chicken?”

“Hurry up and come down. We big bros are getting tired.”

The two threw energy blades at Vulcan a few times, but they gave up after watching Vulcan dodge them with ease. Instead, they started to annoy Vulcan with their words.

Vulcan felt he was dealing with two annoying flies.

‘I was thinking for a while..... Well, I can do it later at an easy pace.’

Vulcan slowly came down to the surface.

“Haha. What’s this? Were you trying to come up with a plan or something?”

“Now that you got a taste of it, it is tough to handle, isn’t it? If so, why don’t you just go float up in the air again? Once our boss steps in, that will be the end for you.”

“I was thinking for a while.....”

“Uh?”

“I’m the kind that does not trust the words of others so easily. Even when someone badmouths about another, at first, I don’t trust what I hear. I make efforts to stay neutral until I see it

myself.”

Turan roughly scratched his baldhead with his left hand and said,

“What kind of bull crap are you talking about?”

Vulcan replied,

“Well, it’s nothing special. This is the conclusion I came to after experiencing it myself and carefully analyzing it.”

Vulcan raised up and opened his left hand toward the sky.

“You guys are indeed garbage.”

“..... this little runt.”

“Infinite Flame Sphere, Infinite Flame Sphere, Infinite Flame Sphere.”

Fist-sized chunks of flames poured out of Vulcan’s palm.

With initiation of each skill, five spheres popped out. Watching this made the brothers feel threatened. Turan quickly shouted the skill activation word,

“Charge!”

BAAM!

Turan charged at Vulcan like a cannon ball. Vulcan faced Turan with a smile. Vulcan controlled the Infinite Flame Spheres, aligning ten of them along the path between Turan’s trajectory toward himself. It was done at an incredible speed that Turan could never have responded to.

“What.....!”

BOOMBOOMBOOMBOOMBOOMBOOM!

A series of explosion occurred, and dark dust clouds bloomed from the explosions.

Turan suffered severe damage before getting close to Vulcan. Turan completely collapsed to the ground like a starfish with his arms and legs fully extended.

“You... You stupid little brother.....”

“That stupid little brother of yours is more agile and more of a threat than you.”

“You son of a..... Blink!”

Huran was about to say something, but without any hesitation, he suddenly used Blink. Vulcan's blade cut through Huran's after image.

Vulcan whistled and placed his blade on his shoulder.

“Running away and providing support. You don't know how to do anything else.”

“You little runt! Heavenly Horse.....”

BOOM!

Before Huran could finish shouting the skill commands, an Infinite Flame Sphere attacked Huran's head. Huran quickly raised his giant sword to defend himself, but he could not help the skill from being cut off before activation.

“Being able to shout the activation commands is the lifeline of the players. Yet you can't even concentrate on it properly with this little bit of interference. This is why I am saying you are worse than your brother.”

“Shut your trap! Sky Shattering Lone.....”

BOOM!

An Infinite Flame Sphere flew at him once again and interrupted

his shouting of skill command. Huran, in a state of enrage, charged at Vulcan. On the other hand, in the way Vulcan was gazing on Huran, there was no sign of fear. In fact, Vulcan's expression was incredibly peaceful and at ease.

“And this is the most important part.....”

“You son of a bitch!”

The giant sword was raised high, ready to cut Vulcan in half.

Vulcan watched it with calm eyes, and in a speed of lightning he pierced into right in front of Huran's stomach.

“.....!”

“Lightning Fist.”

PUUUK.

Huran's eyes widened for a moment, and then soon they lost focus as he lost consciousness. Huran was drooling as he was collapsing on to Vulcan's shoulder. Vulcan pushed away Huran's body and added one more thing.

“Other than your skills, your movements are really terrible.”



## Chapter 20 - Players Alliance (3)

---

An uneasy silence was flowing among those in the Beloong city's southern field.

Even when Vulcan was tossing the two unconscious players to the back, the uneasy silence continued. Vulcan could feel Berkman's surprised gaze and Uruo's stern, controlled gaze at the same time.

Upon looking at Uruo's gaze, Vulcan felt his presumed image about the leader of Players Alliance being shattered little by little.

'It doesn't look like he is just a thug who is only interested in exploiting newbies.'

Uruo's eyes were those of someone with a purpose, a conviction.

However, Vulcan wasn't all that curious about it. Vulcan came here to end things once and for all because he was concerned that the Players Alliance will not stop pestering him if he left it be.

"So now, do you feel like having a conversation?"

"Big bro, allow me to....."

"No."

Uruo stopped Berkman who was stepping forward.

“Did you not feel his power? You are no match for him at your level.”

“That’s.....”

“Also, I have something I am curious about. What for a moment.”

Uruo took a step toward Vulcan. Uruo’s face was expressionless as if he was wearing a facemask. Only his eyes were sharp and lighting up.

“Compared to your level, your abilities are quite impressive.”

“..... Thanks for the compliments.”

“I was merely stating a truth in a truthful manner.”

“In that case, I will tell you a truth. Your minions, they are terrible. Their skills are powerful, but everything else is a mess.”

“I acknowledge that. I have them under me just because they are not as bad of garbage as the other Players.”

“..... This mood, it is not right. Didn’t you pick a fight with me

on purpose?”

Vulcan thought about the three that he encountered on the east gate. At that time, they were coming at Vulcan with a violent intent, as if they were going to chop off a leg or two for the taking without any hesitation, but the mood here with Uruo was suddenly turning into something different.

“I was wrong about you. I thought you were just a little pig with a pearl necklace on his neck, so I treated you carelessly. For that, I am sorry.”

“I cannot understand what you are saying.”

Vulcan didn't try to hide the fact that he was feeling uncomfortable.

Instead, he kicked a pebble on the ground, which flew in an arc trajectory, landing and rolling, and finally coming to a stop at Uruo's foot.

“I want to hear a proper explanation.”

“Of course. But first, I'll ask you one thing first.”

“What is it.”

A serious voice came out from Uruo's mouth.

“What do you think of the Players?”

“..... What is this about? Players are Players.”

In fact, Vulcan had no particular opinion about the Players. From the start, Vulcan didn't have enough to spare for thinking about other people.

It appeared that this was not the case with Uruo.

“You have no opinion after seeing those pigs. You must really be a runt with no interest in other people.”

“I'm in a situation where I'm quite busy, so yeah you are right about that. So, why are you criticizing the Players?”

“Because they don't put in any effort.”

‘Now what's this about?’

Vulcan was going to talk right back, to ask him why he is keep spewing out nonsense, but Vulcan suddenly thought about what Anderson said. Anderson said he would be satisfied with just being level 200, and remembering that put a stop to Vulcan.

‘Certainly, people seem to have lost the concept of having goals after coming to Asgard.’

However, that was irrelevant to Vulcan, so he didn't care about such.

From the start, Vulcan was thinking why he should meddle with other people's way of lives.

“What you are saying is right, but that's just result of people choosing to live their lives in their own way. Why are you getting all worked up over that? I don't get it. Uruo..... is that your name?”

“That's right.”

“Okay, Uruo. You don't have the right to criticize them and brand them as pigs.”

“What if I do have the right, then what are you going to do?”

“.....What?”

“As the leader who represents the alliance of Players, and as the man with the highest level among all Players, I cannot just sit and watch them taint the dignity of Players.”

‘..... Now what's this crazy talk for?’

Vulcan was so lost with Uruo's nonsense that he could not think

of a good place to start on questioning Uruo.

Vulcan could not keep his hands and legs calm because of Uruo's ridiculousness. Vulcan couldn't quite control his facial expressions well either. Vulcan barely stopped himself from bursting into a belittling laughter. He said,

“I am not getting any of what you are talking about. The dignity of players, what's this about? Where is such a thing? People are just living the way that's most convenient for them.”

“I heard you trained under Filder. It looks like you know nothing about Beloong city.”

“.....”

Actually, other than locations of the hunting grounds and information about monsters, Vulcan barely knew anything, so he was lost for words at the moment.

Uruo recognized Vulcan's silence as acknowledgement to his statement, and Uruo continued his explanation.

“Do you know how many people reside in Beloong city?”

“About twenty thousand, isn't it?”

“That's right. It is not a lot of people, but it isn't a small number

either. When there are that many people gathered in a city, do you really think it makes sense for everyone to operate independently without belonging to factions?”

“..... Are you meaning there are organizations?”

“There are three factions.”

‘This is the first I heard about this.’

In a way, it was obvious. As Uruo said, there was no way for the people to be not divided into factions when there are twenty thousand people in the city.

Moreover, the constituent situation in Beloong city was made to be very easy to divide people based on the origin.

‘What was Mr. Anderson doing not telling me something like this.’

Vulcan, who was deep in thought, listened to more of Uruo’s explanation.

“I’m guessing there must be fractions of Murim, Powel, and Players.”

“Incorrect. Players are not considered as a faction.”

“..... For what reason?”

Vulcan stared at Uruo, looking confused and questioning the reason.

At that moment, for the first time, Uruo's face actually showed what could be considered as an expression.

His expression was reflecting shame and rage.

“Without talent and effort, lacking in abilities, the Players don't even get to be treated as a faction.”

“Hum.....”

Uruo was agitated with his emotions, and he was shaking a little even.

Uruo fell deep into his thoughts and emotions. He was exuding an atmosphere that stated nobody should dare to disturb him, but Vulcan was extremely curious about what the last faction was, so he tossed the question anyway.

“If that's the case, then what is the last faction?”

“..... People that works under the Beloong City's Six.”



“Ah, you mean those people.”

In case of Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo, they both went their separate ways after finishing the training, but some trainees admired the strength of the Six and chose to become members of the patrol, clinic, stables and etc. to help the Six and continue receiving training.

“All right. Now I understand there being factions in the Beloong city. But, so what about it?”

“I told you before. Players are suffering the indignity of not even being recognized as a faction.”

“That’s indeed a shame, but Players are weaker than those from Powel or Murim, so what could possibly be done about that?”

“That’s it. You got to the main point.”

Like a politician taking a long pause before starting his long speech, Uruo took a deep breath and told Vulcan his thoughts.

“The bastards called Players do not put in any effort. In light of substantially higher difficulty in Asgard, they threw away long ago their thoughts about returning to their home worlds. Over half of the Players just get by everyday hunting vagrant goblins to make enough to pay for drinks.”

“.....”

“Despite Filder emphasizing over and over until his lips turned dry, less than tenth of the Players train for masteries. Say they gave up because it takes ten or a hundred years to rank up? No. These bastards only want to chase after easy methods and still be treated like they were in the previous worlds.”

Uruo spat on the ground. It was toward Miluwall who got knocked out from the lightning bolt earlier.

“I was the one that rectified them so they could at least be treated as humans. Therefore, I am more than qualified to call them pigs. It’s nothing.”

After hearing all that, Vulcan talked right back at Uruo.

“No. I don’t think that is right. Even parents that raised the child shouldn’t treat him or her without respect. What you have done for these people is not that big to give you the right to .....

“It is that great. No, it is even greater.”

Berkman suddenly jumped in and interrupted Vulcan. Vulcan looked at Berkman.

Berkman looked even more agitated than Uruo. Berkman’s entire body turned red in anger.

‘..... I can’t understand this situation.’

Uruo stopped Berkman from stepping forward in his agitated state.

Vulcan could hear Uruo’s voice again, and this time, Uruo was calmer than a moment ago.

“Don’t say such things so easily when you have been in the Beloong city for only 3 to 4 years. You don’t understand the indignity that some people suffered for ten years or over a hundred years. Also, you don’t know how hard I worked to reduce that indignity at least to the level it is now.”

“All right. Let’s just assume that you have done a great work. I will stipulate to that as a fact. I sincerely express my eternal and deepest gratitude for your incredible and amazing effort and sacrifice in fighting on the frontline for the sake of improving the rights of the Players.”

“Cut your sarcasm.”

“Since you said to cut the sarcasm, I will. So, if that’s the case with you, how are you going to excuse yourself on the fact that you exploited low level Players and intentionally picked a fight with me?”

“I won’t make excuses. I indeed exploited them, and I also tried to drag you here to extract information out of you.”

Vulcan was at lost for words due to the ridiculousness of Uruo's response. Vulcan stared at Uruo.

“Just why are you so proud?”

“What's there to be not proud about.”

“You exploited others and tried to harm others, so is it still normal to be proud of such then?”

“For the sake of all Players, it is necessary to sacrifice a few lazy ones.”

The expression on Uruo's face was that of someone who was trying to stay strong despite all the pain and sorrow he was feeling. Like that, Uruo continued.

“This place has an average level of 200, and there are countless 300 and 400 levels. In a place like this, as a price of being placed inside a fence called a faction, exploitation being the end of it is considered mercy.”

“Looks like you live deep inside a fantasy world of your own. Thunder God's Might. Infinite Flame Orb.”

Lightning sparks were generated from Vulcan's entire body, an incredible amount to the point of blinding those around him. The

five Infinite Flame Orbs generated were circling around Vulcan as if they were guarding the caster, exuding violent energies as they zapped around and looked for opportunities for attack.

Uruo also assumed combat stance. When he made a fist and released his hand, a sphere of energy revealed itself despite Uruo not having cast the skill by words.

“.....!”

Uruo noticed Vulcan’s surprise and said,

“There was one thing I didn’t get to say a moment ago.”

“..... What?”

Vulcan responded while being slightly nervous.

“I wanted to have you join the Players Alliance.”

“What?”

“I knew the moment I saw you. Unlike other boneheads, you show signs of having put efforts to increase your masteries. You have worked very hard all this time in this shitty world. It is a great accomplishment.”

“.....”

“I took a grand stand and said I rectified the Players, but the reality is, there are still only very few Players that wholeheartedly give their all in to training. A talent like you, I would welcome unconditionally. If you help me along sides with Berkman here for just twenty years..... Players Alliance can rise as the forth faction. Players can finally live without being treated like garbage.”

Uruo, holding the energy sphere on his right hand, stared up at the sky. To Vulcan, Uruo’s slightly intoxicated gaze looked like someone who was indoctrinated into a cult.

‘Looks like his mind got twisted after living in Asgard for too long.’

Uruo’s attitude, acting as if Beloong city is the place he was born and raised in, was creeping out Vulcan.

However, thinking about all the situations Uruo must have faced, Vulcan could understand some of his sentiments.

‘Among Players, some must have lived several decades or perhaps hundreds of years in Beloong city. From some perspective, having his life goal in this place is not unexpected.....’

Not being able to clear the Act 1 for so long, it appeared Uruo was encroached by this world and became a part of it.

Vulcan felt a bit of commiseration toward Uruo.

However, Vulcan couldn't afford to be generous toward him for Uruo's circumstances.

Vulcan spent five years in Rubel continent, and another three years now in Asgard.

It had been eight years already since he lived in these new dimensions without being able to set foot on Earth.

Vulcan was in too much of a hurry to operate while minding political circumstances in Beloong city, a place he thought he would be leaving soon.

Vulcan's preemptive strike against the Players Alliance's main force wasn't for avenging exploited low level players. Vulcan was doing it just to eliminate obstacles in his way.

From the start, there was no need to consider the problem of right and wrong in any of this.

It was just a matter of quickly eliminating all that got in the way.

"My answer is no. My work schedule tomorrow is pretty tight as it is."

"Is that so..... Berkman."

“Yes, big bro.”

In response to Uruo’s call, Berkman handed out his right arm. Uruo used his left arm to grab Berkman’s arm and recited the skill command.

“Mana Absorption.”

“KUUK.”

The mana energy that sustained Berkamn’s internals flew into Uruo, strengthening the power of Uruo’s skill.

In front of Vulcan were Berkman on his knees and Uruo holding an even bigger energy sphere exuding intensified light.

“If you are going to refuse, then I have no other choice. You won’t be handing over the information either right?”

“There is no easy method for leveling up, and even if there was, I have no intention of telling you.”

“I see. It is a shame.”

Uruo sighed briefly, lifted his chin and starred at Vulcan with eyes full of arrogance.



“If that’s the case, I should at least extract and consume your skill.”

“It won’t be easy.”

Fearsome and terrifying aura poured out from both Uruo and Vulcan.

## Chapter 21 - Players Alliance (4)

---

The gazes from Vulcan and Uruo violently collided in midair. While not losing sight of Uruo, Vulcan started casting skills.

“Infinite Flame Orb, Infinite.....”

“[TAN](#).”

\*Translation Note: The “TAN” sound is similar to the word “bullet” in Korean.

Uruo didn’t leave Vulcan to his method. Even before Vulcan could finish casting the second Infinite Flame Orb, Uruo’s energy orb flew toward Vulcan at an incredible speed. Vulcan lowered his upper body all the way to dodge the energy orb.

That wasn’t the end of Uruo’s attacks. Countless energy orbs were being produced from Uruo as he repeatedly made fists with his hands and released them, and they were harassing Vulcan to no end.

Each energy orb flew toward Vulcan at bullet-like speed when Uruo shouted ‘TAN,’ and its piercing and destructive powers were incredible. Vulcan noted a hole was created on the ground with a collapsing sound. From Vulcan’s perspective, it looked like the result from a sniper bullet.

However, Vulcan was managing to dodge them all as well. Vulcan’s dodge ability too was incredible. Unlike a gun, Uruo’s

energy orb attacks were difficult to determine where they were being aimed at.

Despite this, Vulcan dodged all energy orbs, and he did so with efficient and clean-cut movements, not the flashy circus-like acrobatics.

Vulcan evaded all of Uruo's attacks using merely a few steps; Vulcan was demonstrating a God-like ability.

Vulcan counter attacked in midst of being bombarded by Uruo's attacks.

Five Infinite Flame Orbs that he made earlier were launched toward Uruo. As a basic-of-the-basics measure, Infinite Flame Orbs were made to come at Uruo from directions that would be difficult to dodge.

Infinite Flame Orbs approached Uruo from front and back. Uruo peeked a smile and grabbed an energy orb on his right hand.

“HAAP!”

BOOMBOOMBOOMBOOMBOOM!

“.....”

With just two swings, Uruo exploded all Infinite Flame Orbs

using an energy orb on his right hand.

It was like watching someone break eggs thrown at him using a stone on his hand.

The battle came to a brief moment of pause. Two men looked at each other in silence.

An uncomfortable silence continued for a while, and then Uruo opened his mount first.

“Your dodge ability is amazing. Looks like you cared a lot about its mastery.”

“I’m a bit of a hard worker, so I never skipped a day of training.”

“I see... It would be nice if my minions could be like you, even if it is only about a half way there.”

“Is that a compliment?”

“It is a compliment.”

“If that’s the case, I will give you a compliment as well. What you are using..... TAN? Just how are you generating the orbs without uttering skill commands? Also, when you attack, you shout ‘TAN’ and an orb is launched. Is that when the magic is considered used?”

Vulcan was really curious.

He was surprised by Uruo's use of magic without uttering skill commands. However, he was intrigued even more about the fact that Uruo appeared to be doing it not by the way of a traditional magic, but using SYSTEM. Vulcan's curiosity was to the point where he had to stop the battle for a moment just to ask the opponent.

“This is a pretty expensive information.”

“If you do not want to tell me, then it is fine.”

“All right.”

“..... Usually, when a man says something like what I said, isn't this the part where you say, 'Ha, since you are about to die, it wouldn't matter if I told you,' and explain everything?”

Uruo created an energy orb that was larger than the ones from before and said,

“Since you are about to die, it's a bother to even explain.”

“You really are an unlikable bastard. Infinite Flame Orb.”

The round two started.

The flow of battle was similar to a moment before.

Uruo usually attacked, and Vulcan dodged the attacks.

Whenever Vulcan had a moment to spare, he cast and launched Infinite Flame Orbs and Lightning toward Uruo, but Uruo's defense was also on the sturdy side, so it was not enough to cause any effective damage. Uruo's attacks were also no match for Vulcan's dodge ability, hence a tight battle without any damage continued for a long time.

“.....”

Berkman watched the two men's offensive and defensive techniques, and his mouth was open wide in awe. He could not close his mouth.

Berkmn lost his strength for the moment because he gave his mana to Uruo. So he watched the battle from a far distance to avoid being swept into the battle. Berkman was not able to hide his shock from the unexpected flow of the battle.

Berkman never imagined movements of a mere Third-Rate like Vulcan could be so amazing.

‘How..... How could a190 level Player display movements of such a high mastery?’

Of course, the one leading the battle was Uruo. Uruo, who had a substantially lower restriction on skill casting, was effectively suppressing Vulcan's use of skills, dominating the flow of the battle.

Moreover, Uruo was not using his full power yet. If he used the energy orb that was continuously gaining in its size, Uruo could seriously pressure Vulcan, and the outcome of the battle would be decided then.

However, considering the difference in two men's levels, it could also be said that Vulcan is the winner based on technicality.

Level 327 vs. level 190.....

The difference was over 130, yet Vulcan managed to close this huge gap in level using his abilities. It was a respectable feat.

‘There was a reason why the big bro wanted him to join the alliance.’

Vulcan possessed frightening masteries and combat sense.

His abilities were enough to consider him as the second savior who could change the bleak realities of the Players.

‘That's probably why the boss is not able to just end this.....’

Berkman felt that this was such a waste.

Even Berkman was feeling that way, so Berkman could imagine just how much more so Uruo must be feeling, from perspective of a man who worked hard since several decades ago.

However, it could not be helped now. Both Vulcan and Uruo already piled ill intents toward each other. The terms between the two already have crossed the river that they could not come back from.

To Vulcan, it was better to eliminate Uruo before he became a bigger hindrance later.

Vulcan's gaze toward Uruo became cold.

\*\*\*

While Berkman was lost in thoughts, the battle continued restlessly. The surrounding areas became littered with holes a long time ago, and there were places stained by Vulcan's magic here and there.

‘He is truly impressive.’

Uruo found Vulcan's abilities to be admirable. He figured Vulcan must be superior to other Players, but he never thought it would be to this extent. Other than the fact that Vulcan was lacking in power due to differences in level and stats, he was comparable to



Uruo himself.

‘However..... All of your running and jumping around end here.’

Uruo felt the energy orb that he placed behind him was approaching its limit.

If was time for Uruo to create an opportunity where he could strike Vulcan with certainty.

Uruo spoke,

“TAN, TAN, TAN.”

Three energy orbs were launched, going after Vulcan from the right side.

Vulcan made a clean evasive maneuver as always and retreated toward the left. As Vulcan moved, he could see Uruo jumping high.

Uruo got on top of the energy orb that he created, and his thighs swelled up significantly in volume.

He shouted the skill command,

“[POK!](#)”

\*Translation Note: “POK” sound is similar to the word “explode”

in Korean.

With a BOOM! Sound, Uruo's body was launched toward Vulcan at a high speed like a rocket.

Vulcan gasped for air in light of an unthinkable use of skill by Uruo.

‘Charging forward using the reaction from the explosion..... I should have dodged to the back.’

No matter how quickly Vulcan regretted his decision, regardless, it was still too late. Vulcan quickly raised his sword and blocked Uruo's fist.

TUUKUAAANG!

The level 150 blade could not withstand Uruo's attack and broke.

Still, thanks to it, Vulcan was able to get past the danger without taking a serious damage. Vulcan used the opposite reaction from throwing his sword and widened the distance between Uruo and himself.

However, Uruo's scheme was hiding where Vulcan was headed.

Vulcan took a peek at his back after feeling something sturdy behind him.

“.....!”

There was a boulder that managed to not break apart despite the intense battle. It was blocking Vulcan's path of retreat.

Uruo and Vulcan's eyes met. Uruo was smiling toward Vulcan.

The giant energy orb was shaking uncontrollably due to excessive energy input, and Uruo was just about to launch it toward Vulcan. At that moment, Uruo also realized that Vulcan too was smiling just like himself.

‘For what reason..... KURRRHUUK!’

KUWAAANG!

Breaking through the ground that Uruo was standing, an explosive stream of flame rose up.

The flame was rising high and beyond, piercing the night sky as if a God of earth threw a spear to the sky.

A moment had passed. Uruo, who was thrown high up to the sky, crashed to the ground along with a thudding sound upon the impact.

“H..... how.....!”

With eyes enlarged due to pain, Uruo looked all around himself.

He could see Vulcan approaching him, wielding the broken blade.

Uruo tried hardest to not lose consciousness. In order to salvage a little bit of mana, he made efforts to disengaging energy orbs that were already scattering from having lost the control from the caster.

After making desperate efforts, Uruo managed to regain just enough energy to prevent himself from passing out. Still in his lying-down position, he lifted his head. It was to ask a question to Vulcan.

“I was cert..... KUARK..... certain that you did not shout any skill commands.... You did not..... KUK..... do anything out of ordinary..... to cast skills eith.....”

“This is an expensive information.”

Uruo’s gaze turned violent.

“In a situation..... like this, you are cracking jokes..... Just how much have you been..... belittling.....”

“I have not been underestimating or belittling you..... To properly express my thoughts, I was actually closer to being

amazed.”

Actually, from the battles against these Players, Vulcan really noticed many thought provoking things, and he was truly amazed in some of them.

In particular, compared to Turan and Huran that came before, Uruo’s skill casting method was substantially more astonishing.

“Now that it appears I am an equal to you, I will ask you something first. How are you able to use skills without any utterance? The words you used during the launch or explosion, TAN, and POK, are they the skill commands?”

“Do you think I will tell you.....”

“Also, now that I thought about it, it is odd that very short skill commands like TAN and POK exist. Uruo, this is give-and-take. If you give me a proper explanation about this, I will also give you a proper answer to your question.”

Uruo cringed. However, because he had a burning question to Vulcan, Uruo had no other alternatives. He started explaining.

“..... After you become used to the skill and used it often..... even if you do not say the entire skill command..... it becomes possible to activate the skill. My skill’s original name..... it is not TAN either.”

“So that’s how it is. What’s the skill’s original name?”

“..... It is Amplification Glass Marble. Once you used a skill for a long time, get accustomed to it, and gained an understanding of the skill..... then you will be able to do it. Now, it is your turn. How could you use magic..... without speaking the command words? Since you asked me about mine, it must be a different method.....”

Vulcan did not answer Uruo’s question. It was because Vulcan was deep in thoughts and did not hear the rest of Uruo’s words.

‘Other than using magic through training in traditional magic, even skills in SYSTEM....., depending on how well the user understands the skill and is accustomed it, can be modified to have a shorter command? That was suppose to be possible?’

Vulcan was agonizing over the fact that he never managed to accomplish this, but he soon found the reason.

It was because Vulcan never even bothered to try.

‘I just assumed that in order to use the skills, I had to shout skill commands.....’

Vulcan realized how scary a person’s presumption could be.

However, now that he learned about this, Vulcan was optimistic and figured he too should be able to shorten the skill commands

soon.

‘Thinking about this objectively, I am superior when it comes to understanding of skills.’

“Hey..... I answered. So hurry up and tell me..... Is it not polite to answer?”

“Ah, sorry. I was in middle of thinking about something.”

In response to Uruo expressing his complaints, Vulcan apologized completely. The outcome of the battle was out, and a victor has been decided already. In addition, Vulcan got what he wanted as well, so it was only right to give Uruo the answer to his question. Also, Vulcan’s answer was not something that would be causing him a big problem if others knew.

‘To be precise, even if I told him, it is a method that would be difficult to follow.’

Vulcan, looking at Uruo cringing in pain, gave him the answer.

“I did not use the SYSTEM to use the skill.”

“.....?”

Uruo’s face was looking confused. Vulcan added,

“I went through a traditional mage training. So..... using the method identical to that of a mage from Powel, I cast the magic.”

“.....”

Uruo kept silence for a while. Vulcan’s answer, which was an unthinkable scenario for Uruo, was colliding with the norm inside his head.

Uruo’s head was filled with thoughts in disarray. It took a little bit of time for Uruo to organize all of his thoughts. After he understood everything, Uruo started to laugh loudly.

“Hahahaha, Uhahahahahaha! Such ridiculousness! KULUK! KULUK!”

Due to his laughter, his wounds around the body were opening up, but Uruo could not stop laughing for a while. After about ten seconds later, Uruo lie down on the ground with his legs and arms stretched out like a starfish, exhausted.

“If that’s the case, then why didn’t you..... just use the magic without shouting skill commands from the beginning?”

“I didn’t obviously because..... not doing so works great for fooling you.”

“Ha...”



Uruo's entire body was completely exhausted, and his breath too sounded exhausted. Uruo stared into the sky with a hollow gaze and said,

“You are ..... a total son of a bitch.”

## Chapter 22 - An Investor

---

Those were the last words from Uruo before he lost consciousness.

From the start, he was barely holding on using the little bit of mana he managed to recover from disengaging his energy orbs. Actually, his body was in shambles.

The severity of his injuries was to the point where Uruo could lose his life if he wasn't taken to an infirmary soon.

Vulcan walked toward Uruo without saying a word. A strong determination could be felt from each step that Vulcan took.

Blocking Vulcan's path, a giant, Berkman stepped in.

"Go back."

"Why should I go back?"

"The outcome of battle had been decided. There is no need to see further bloodshed, don't you think?"

"You should have thought of that before picking a fight with me."

The ironclad response from Vulcan, and his cold tone of voice,

made Berkman take a dry gulp.

Berkman was getting nervous from the possibility of a battle that could break out at any moment. He prepared for the worst and said to Vulcan,

“I acknowledge that we were the ones that started it. However, from the start, we had no intention of taking your life. It is just that there were many misunderstandin.....”

“Misunderstandings?”

“.....that’s right. I’m sure you figured it out from the conversations earlier, but we do not kill Players so carelessly. We force them to take parts in trainings or employ them in hunting, but we are, in essence, an organization in pursuit of all players’ advancement as a the whole.”

“Hum.”

“We just have a different path to our purpose. Please, stop this here.”

Berkman continued with a sincere face.

“As Berkman, the second-in-command of Players Alliance, I promise you that, from now on, we will never do anything that would get in your way.”

Vulcan poked at his ears as he watched Berkman.

Although he was saying it all with a desperate face, it wasn't invoking anything particular in Vulcan.

There was one thing that Vulcan learned from struggling through Rubel continent for five years.

Do not leave loose ends.

“Before I came to this dimension, there is something that I heard. About the skill that enables its user to steal another's abilities..... It appears your boss has an interesting skill. I heard that in order to obtain that skill..... you have to murder someone. So you are still telling me there was no intent to kill?”

Vulcan tossed the broken sword to the ground and brought out a spare from his inventory.

His actions spoke louder and clearer than a hundred words.

Berkman cursed in a low voice. He took a boxing stance and said a skill command,

“Boulder Technique!”

Berkman's tanned skin turned gray. He looked solid as if nothing

could pierce him, as if he would not shed a single drop of blood if he was stabbed. Vulcan faced Berkman as he took a quick-draw blade technique stance.

‘I’m not going to take it easy like I did with Uruo in the beginning.’

It was going to be a big problem if the patrol team came by before the battle ended. Vulcan was bent on defeating Berkman in a single strike. Vulcan tightened his stand’s focus on tip of his feet.

The intense atmosphere felt like the fight was about to break out at a drop of a pin.

Breaking that uneasy atmosphere, a man suddenly dropped down from the sky.

Tatak.

It looked like he jumped from a pretty high place, making an arc as he came down at an accelerated speed, but strangely, his landing step sounded too soft. It was almost miraculous.

It was a feat that could only be demonstrated by martial art grand masters with a complete mastery in speed step technique. Vulcan’s alerted gaze turned toward the unwelcome guest.

[493Lv]

‘That man..... It’s that guy I ran into when I first came to the city.’

He was one of the two that Vulcan had squabbles with when Vulcan first arrived at the Beloong City.

‘I was certain he was around 300 level..... Did he have an enlightenment since?’

His current level was 493, an astonishing number.

Of all Zeniths, his level was unmatched. In light of this incredible level, Vulcan’s alertness spiked to its peak.

“Hello everyone?”

A relaxed voice full of ease was flowing out of Lee JungYup’s mouth. Berkman greeted the man with an awkward face.

“..... How do you do Sir?”

“Oh, well, well, how’s your boss doing?..... Oh, this can’t be, who could have done such a vile thing!”

Lee JungYup made a fuss as he rushed to Uruo who was lying unconscious on the ground.

“KU... this kid isn't someone who would go around getting beat up. There isn't anyone from Powel or Murim that would be so rotten to the core to do something extreme like this..... Let me do the first aid.”

Lee JungYup brought out a potion from his sleeves, sprayed it all over Uruo's body, and performed pressure point treatments to prevent Uruo's condition from worsening.

Even though Berkman had his eyes wide open and strained them to see, it was difficult to follow Lee JungYup's hand movements. His movements were that fast.

Lee JungYup had his back turned towards Vulcan, and that was hurting Vulcan's pride. However he couldn't make a move against Lee JungYup's back so carelessly either. Vulcan didn't exactly have a just cause to attack him, but it was more about the fact that Lee JungYup looked so relaxed and was exuding natural confidence. There was also the matter of his high level.

“Now, I roughly put out the biggest fire.”

Lee JungYup stood back up, pretended to wipe sweat off his forehead, and directed his gaze toward Vulcan's eyes.

Up until now, Lee JungYup was acting like a comedy actor for a stage with exaggerated mannerisms, but that attitude suddenly disappeared. Lee JungYup revealed his true self as a man of martial arts.

Lee JungYup was a man who joined the ranks of the strongest in the Beloong City. His extraordinary aura pressured Vulcan's entire body.

Vulcan resisted the aura by gathering his magic power. Although it was not easy because of the difference in levels, Vulcan could at least pretend to be at ease and start a conversation.

“What makes you think you can interfere?”

“Hooh.”

Lee JungYup stared at Vulcan with a surprised look. He turned his head toward Berkman.

“Hey, that guy is a Player right? What's his current level? Tell me mine too.”

“.....It's 190. Sir Lee JungYup, your level is currently 493.”

“Wow, really? Then this guy is not even a Second-Rate. How is he standing his ground?”



Lee JungYup murmured as if he was standing in front of a mystery he could not solve.

Vulcan was having an extremely bad feeling about the current situation. Vulcan tossed a question at Lee JungYup who appeared to be deep in thought.

“Who are you?”

“Ah, by chance, you don’t know me? I am pretty famous.”

“Lee JungYup. Level 493. Other than that, I don’t know anything about you. Should I?”

“No, not necessarily.....”

“Anyway, if you are from Murim, then you must be fully aware how disgraceful it is to interfere with someone else’s indebtedness or grudge.”

Vulcan didn’t know much about Asgard, but he at least knew that in matters of indebtedness, grudge, vengeance, and duel among individuals, those from Murim honor them with their lives.

Now matter how Vulcan looked at it, based on Lee JungYup’s getup and his facial features, it was apparent that Lee JungYup was from Murim.

This was the reason Vulcan brought up the subject about honor.

However, Lee JungYup's response was completely off from Vulcan's expectation.

"I know, but I am an honor-less bastard, so I don't give a damn about such."

"....."

Vulcan could not hide his surprised face. On the other hand, Lee JungYup looked as if there was nothing wrong with what he said, and he casually continued,

"It was a joke. I am suppose to be one of the leaders in the ways of virtuous conduct, so I can't just poke into other people's business without a just cause."

Lee JungYup looked around the surroundings.

His gaze passed through Miluwall, who was knocked out even before the battle started, Huran and then Turan. In the end, Lee JungYup directed his gaze at Vulcan.

"These men are my subordinates. I will apologize in their place, so how about ending it here?"

Of course, it was unacceptable for Vulcan.

They were like time bombs with unspecified time remaining before they go off. Vulcan couldn't think of a way to stand having something like that hanging over his head at all times.

“These men made attempts at my life. I have absolutely no intention of taking on the risk when I have the cleanest solution at hand.”

“Hum.....”

Lee JungYup strained himself in thoughts for a while and said to Vulcan,

“For a runt that isn't even from Murim, it seems you sure know a lot about the ways of Murim. So let me ask you this.....”

‘KUUT.’

Sensing sudden rise in Lee JungYup's aggression, Vulcan winced as he took steps back.

Overflowing with murderous aura streaming out of him like fountain, Lee JungYup slowly approached Vulcan.

“In all of Murim's sacred principles, there is one that is the most important above all else. Do you know what that is?”

“Thunder God’s Might!”

PAC! CHIGIGIZIZIZIK!

Vulcan raised the Thunder God’s Might to its peak power. Vulcan no longer had any margin to spare to keep up this bravado.

On the other hand, Lee JungYup was still pressuring Vulcan with a calm face, still looking confident as ever.

“..... It’s the pride of being the strongest.”

Vulcan took a combat stance. The blade on his right hand pointed toward Lee JungYup, and his left hand had mana gathered and ready to launch magic at any time. In light of Vulcan’s reaction, Lee JungYup asked as if he was surprised.

“..... By chance, are you intending to come at me?”

“If necessary.”

There could be difference in the destructive power due to the gap in levels.

However, that was all.

Vulcan already had masteries exceeding level 500.

As long as he diligently took potions and dragged this out to a battle of attrition, Vulcan thought that it would be enough to overcome the difference in stats.

Vulcan's and Lee JungYup's gazes collided.

In suffocating silence, Lee JungYup was standing there with a menacing face as if he was now a completely different person from a moment ago.

In light of Lee JungYup, who appeared to be like a Grim Reaper of abyss, neither Berkman nor Miluwall, who just regained consciousness before anyone realized, could say a word.

However, the one that broke this silence was, ironically, Lee JungYup.

“Hum, this poses a problem for me. When it comes to duels, I am the type that, in eight or nine out of ten, no... in ten out of ten cases, I only pick fights that I would win.”

Lee JungYup instantly squashed his fighting spirit and went back to his usual self.

Everyone was confused by the situation.

They could not tell to what extent he was being serious, and to

what extent he was joking, so everyone didn't know what to make of it all.

Vulcan didn't disengage his stance. He asked Lee JungYup,

“Are you backing off?”

“That's right. I will be backing off, however...”

Lee JungYup brought in Huran, Turan and Uruo through telekinesis. While Vulcan was giving a blank stare for the moment due to not having fully comprehended the situation, Lee JungYup brought out a piece of paper and tore it apart.

UOOOUNG.

A magic circle formed underneath Lee JungYup and the members of Players Alliance. With smile on his face, Lee JungYup said his last farewell to Vulcan.

“I'll be backing off with everyone.”

PAT!

The magic circle, which was shining in blue light, disappeared. In the northern field, all that stood was now just Vulcan.

After confirming that there was nothing around him, Vulcan plumped down on the ground where he stood and started to think.

‘I had a moment to stop him, but I hesitated. That means.....’

Vulcan repeated making fists and opening the hand thereafter, and he looked at his arm, which was visible through gaps on his clothing, sliced through during the battle. The sensation of being creeped out was still there. It wasn't gone still.

‘It means I was lacking certainty.’

Vulcan looked up the sky. Just like on Earth, a moon was spreading gentle light across the night sky.

“So in the end, perhaps leveling up would be best.”

The fastest way to close in the gap.

Vulcan's gaze moved toward the Beloong City.

\*

It was close to the midnight, but the Beloong City Pub was full of people.

In groups of three or five, people were gathered to enjoy their

favorite beer, wine or Oriental liquor. Through middle of all those people, a young man walked past them.

People in some tables that recognized the young man changed their table topics toward him.

“I heard that is the man.”

“He looks very young.”

“When it comes to age, even Mr. Filder looks younger than his age, so you can’t tell how old he actually is.”

“Anyway, he is incredible. It hasn’t even been that long since he came to Asgard, but he is already the strongest of all Players.....”

“Hmp. Even if you say he is the strongest of all Players, that’s still just around First-Rate. It’s no big deal.”

“Honestly, still, a First-Rate belongs on the upper class even on Beloong City. Also, Uruo is not an opponent to be taken lightly just because he is a Player.”

“That’s what I’m saying. This runt doesn’t know what he is saying. He is still struggling in Second-Rate level. He is all talk.”

“What? What did you just say? Are you done?”



“Yeah you rascal. Did I say something wrong?”

“Right now, by chance, are you fighting in my pub?”

Before anyone noticed, Filder appeared in the corner where a commotion was happening. As soon as they saw Filder, the two men’s rage toward each other disappeared like snow melting away. The two sat back down quietly.

Filder went away after putting down a roasted duck on the table of two mages chugging on bear. The conversations in the area continued in subdued voices.

“..... Anyway, this guy still has some reasons to be called a rookie.”

“In that case, looks like the rookie ranking will be updated soon. Along with that guy, Dokgo Hoo?”

“I think that man went beyond the level of a rookie.....”

Vulcan, the subject of the conversations, couldn’t hear what they were talking about because of all the noise in the pub, but he could still notice occasional gazes toward him. Vulcan spoke toward Jake.

“Somehow, it feels like people are staring at me.”

“Of course. Two days ago, you destroyed the leader of Players Alliance.”

“..... Mr. Jake. How do you know that?”

“It would be weird if I did not know that. Not just the leader, but you obliterated all others in command. Were you hoping the story would not spread?”

Jake drank Whiskey from the bottle and made ‘KHAH...’ sound in satisfaction.

“And for a merchant, it is imperative to be quick on latest information. Of course, there is also making the moves quickly as well. That’s how I manage to be where I am today.”

“Hum.....”

Vulcan steadily gazed upon Jake. He had an expressive scar on his left cheek, but he didn’t have any strong aura or toughness that could be felt from him.

[Third-Rate Swordsman Jake]

[123Lv]

Even his level was only 1 level higher than the first time Vulcan met him. In Beloong City, where strength was valued the most, there would not be any objections from anyone to call him an outlier.

‘But this man has such a strong influence.’

Vulcan stopped with examining Jake’s appearance. Instead, he looked at Jake’s eyes.

“So, what is it that you want to tell me?”

The one who makes a living as a merchant in Beloong City, a place full of fight maniacs, Jake the Weirdo started talking.

## Chapter 23 - An Investor (Part 2)

---

"I want to invest in you."

"... What do you mean by that?"

"An investment. Don't you know what it means? Did you not receive any basic education in your original world?"

"I know what it means. It is just that I'm hearing the word out of blue. It was unexpected."

Indeed, it was very odd to hear such a word in a place like this. Vulcan had been in living amongst twenty thousand people that were only thinking about finding ways to get stronger. To him, any word not related to combat sounded strange.

Vulcan looked at Jake as if he was trying to say he needed an additional explanation.

"It is as I said earlier. I want to invest in you."

"Just what exactly are you investing in?"

"Anything. Until now, have you ever thought about the following while you were hunting? For instance, ah, this weapon isn't quite fitting my hand. This armor is uncomfortable. If I had equipment that fitted me perfectly, I think I will be able to level up

faster, and so on. I bet you have many items that you want to have but have not had the money and time to get them. I could help you on that.”

“What do you have to gain from helping me?”

“All of the items you get from hunting.”

“... You call that an investment? It is a highway robbery. I’ll be going now.”

Vulcan shook his head left and right.

No matter how young or inexperienced Vulcan appeared to be to Jake, Vulcan did not expect that Jake would try to scam him in such an obvious manner right in his face.

Vulcan was disappointed in Jake. He thought that they were pretty close, but to know Jake would do something like this to him made Vulcan disappointed in Jake. Vulcan pushed the chair to the back to get up.

“Vulcan, you really do want to clear Act 1, right?”

“... Yes. Is there a problem?”

“If that’s the case, please sit for a while. I will explain why my proposal is beneficial to you.”

At the moment, Vulcan wasn't quite standing up, and he wasn't quite sitting down either. After hearing Jake, Vulcan decided to put his butt down the chair. Jake finished what's left of the Whiskey and tossed a question toward Vulcan.

“You don't plan to live here, right?”

“What's that? Of course. I am going to go back to my home world.”

Vulcan wanted to go back to his home world. For eight years, he has not seen his family, friends or the familiar sight on Korea. It had been too long since he last set foot on his home land.

Memories of Earth, instead of fading, they became clearer and got stuck in Vulcan's head like photographs.

“If that's the case, you must want to clear Act 1 as fast as possible. I presume you would even pay money if that could get you to beat it faster.”

“Of course. I am sick of this place. I want to leave as soon as possible even if it is a day sooner.”

“If that's the case, do I still need to explain more?”

“What do you mean?”

Jake pointed toward Vulcan who was still looking confused.

“You are planning on leaving this place anyway. To you, Asgard’s currency or items that do not match your class are useless. So you should give them to me, and...”

Now, Jake pointed toward himself.

“As for my end, I will give you the time that you desperately need. Through the investment that is.”

“When you say you will give me the time...”

“I am talking about the time you would be wasting while looking for the items you need. There is also the time you would be wasting because you would hunt with lack-luster equipment.”

Jake smiled big as he said,

“I can eliminate those wasted time for you.”

\*

[Grand Weapon – Strengthened Lightning Blade]

[Level Restriction: 190Lv]

[Grand Armor – A Giant Orc's Chainmail]

[Level Restriction: 185Lv]

[Legendary Armor – Crazy Flame Boots]

[Level Restriction: 188Lv]

Vulcan's jaw dropped after replacing all of his equipment to Grand level and above. Although the equipment were mismatched in design and style, and they made Vulcan look ridiculous, appearance was a trivial matter to him.

Vulcan opened his stat screen and checked his attack and defense, and soon his face was filled with shock.

His stats were far superior in comparison to before. Vulcan almost felt sorry to even compare them.

‘This must be why people spent real money on video games to get better equipment...’

Vulcan thought that when it came to video games, the fun was in procuring equipment through effort. He now realized that he was mistaken.



Now that Vulcan got to experience achieving a substantial upgrade in his specs without breaking a sweat, his entire body was filling up with sensations of incredible satisfaction and excitement that he never felt before.

“How are they? Do you like them?”

“Yes. Definitely... I really like them.”

“Haha. It is too early for you to be so surprised.”

Jake pointed his finger toward somewhere. Vulcan’s eyes, which were following his lead, opened wide in surprise.

“The.... These are...”

Without realizing, Vulcan walked toward where Jake was pointing to. There were blades and armors neatly arranged together in matching types and displayed neatly like in a mall.

“Level restriction 250, 300, 350... and up to 450... they are all here.”

There were more than just one or two sets of equipment per level. There were armors specializing in fire or lightning elements, and there were four different types of armors for level 350.

This meant that Vulcan didn't have to worry about items until level 500.

With a dumbfounded face, Vulcan looked at Jake.

“These... Are you going to give me all of these?”

“You rascal! What are you talking about!”

Jake brought out a cigarette and put it on his mouth as he continued.

“I am lending them to you. In return, whenever you visit the town, give me items you do not need right away. Huhu.”

Although Jake said he is lending them to Vulcan, since he didn't specify a return date, calling it 'giving' would not have been wrong.

“These... I really cannot refuse these. All right, Mr. Jake. From now on, I will hand over to you all items I get from hunting.”

“HoHo. If you get items that are better than these, you don't need to give them to me. You should be using them instead.”

“Okay. By the way...”

“What is it?”

“I am wondering if you do a lot of investments like this?”

Jake took a moment and exhaled the smoke. Jake received the question with a face as if he was trying to say that what Vulcan asked was a nonsense.

“Not at all. It is not like I have unlimited resources, and it is hard to find someone who would be profitable to invest in. It had been 10 years since my last investment.”

“Hm.”

“Why? Are you wondering why I’m investing in you, of all people?”

“It would be a lie if I said I am not wondering about that.”

Actually, Vulcan was curious. There were so many others who had proven themselves with higher levels and more combat experiences. On the other hand, All Vulcan accomplished so far was beating a low 300 leveler. Still, he was chosen.

“First of all, I chose you because you are trustworthy. If you don’t hold up your end of your bargain, I can just go see the old man Beruneru. You said you trained under Beruneru right?”

“Ah...”

Certainly, Jake did not have to worry about getting scammed.

“Also, the second reason is the most important part.”

Jake looked at Vulcan with a serious face and said,

“It is because when you are the one doing the hunting, more items come out.”

“... Please come again?”

“I am saying you get better items when a Player is the one doing the hunting!”

“Ah.”

‘When other people hunt monsters, they don’t get items like when Players do!’

It was a very logical choice. Only Players got items appear in midair and drop after hunting monsters.

“That makes sense... Since that’s the case, how do people from other dimensions get items? How have they been doing it until now?”

“Obviously, monsters are wielding weapons and armors, so people picked them up after slaying the monsters. However, they are usually not great in quality. Also, even when it is something pretty nice, it is usually damaged all over from the battle... Anyway, so from my perspective, Players are the best ones to invest in.”

Jake interrupted himself and patted Vulcan’s shoulder.

“Until now, there weren’t any Players I could invest in because their levels were low, so I feel like a golden goose just dropped from the sky. I also like that you kicked Uruo’s ass.”

“Are you not in good terms with Uruo?”

“Of course. I was actually going to invest in him... but he decided to suck up to Lee JungYup instead. When I heard that you broke Uruo, it made me feel so much better. Why didn’t you just kill him?”

Vulcan, with a face showing uneasiness, responded,

“I was going to, but Lee JungYup stopped me.”

“Huh. Looks like Uruo certainly got the bribe’s worth. By the way, you... how come you are still here?”

“What do you mean?”

“You said you had a confrontation with Lee JungYup. How come you are still alive?”

“He certainly was powerful... but am I not supposed to be alive?”

As Vulcan cringed, Jake patted his back and said,

“That’s not what I mean. I am not saying you are supposed to be dead. I am asking because Lee JungYup is an incredibly powerful man.”

“Why are you saying that? Just how powerful is he?”

“Beloong City is a place where the strongest of the strongest gather. In this place, he is counted as one of the top ten.”

Shocked, Vulcan asked,

“No way. Doesn’t that mean he is at Mr. Filder’s level?”

“Ah, I am not counting the Six. Those people are beyond comparison.”

Even so, it was still incredible.

Hearing this made Vulcan feel fortunate that a fight didn't break out back then with Lee JungYup, but the thought also became a sharp stick that wounded Vulcan's pride.

However, Vulcan had a good excuse.

It was a problem that Vulcan believed he could resolve quickly. He thought so two days ago, and he still believed so even now.

'I don't believe I am lower than him. As long as I take care of the level problem...'

Vulcan was thinking that once he gained levels, he will gain power, the kind of power that would allow him to never bother to mind about Lee JungYup or the Players Alliance.

Vulcan's eyes gleamed toward Jake. Startled, Jake took a step back. Vulcan asked,

"You are curious about how I survived, right?"

"Uh? Yes. Honestly, yes I am. Why? Are you going to show me your skill?"

"I would like to. You are my investor, so I have a need to impress you as well. I will most certainly show you the level of my skills."

Listening to Vulcan's confident words made Jake laugh out in an

exhilarating way.

Other people passing by looked at Jake, wondering if something happened.

“Haha. That’s how it should be. Right! As an investor, I do have a need to see what you are made of! It is late today, so let’s get going early tomorrow. How about meeting at the west gate at 8 am?”

“Um? Why the west gate?”

“Um?”

“What I’m saying is, is there a particular reason why you have to meet me at the west gate? Is there somewhere you need to stop by before?”

“To go to Orc’s Colony, you should go to the west gate. Did you confuse the place?”

Jake thought that Vulcan, who is currently level 190, would be going to the 200 level Orc’s Colony. However, Vulcan had no intention of going there.

“No. Let’s meet at the south gate. Also, at 7 instead of 8.”

“Um? O... okay. Looks like I will have to get up early.”



‘Why is this guy keep saying he wants to meet on the south gate?’

Dumbfounded, Jake murmured by himself.

\*

“Magic Mirror. Fire Wall. Fire Shower.”

KUUUUAAAK.

KUUAKUUAU.

A cylindrical shaped wall of flame appeared on the south gate side’s greenfield.

The cylindrical wall of flame reached the height over 30 feet, perfectly surrounding the two monsters inside. Moreover, the Fire Shower looming above presented them with gruesome pain.

KUUUWARRRR!

“Lightning. Lightning. Infinite Flame Orb.”

Not able to withstand the pain, the twin-headed ogres were trying to jump out, but Vulcan pointed his blade toward them. Two lightning bolts launched from his blade robbed the monsters of their minds, and bombardment from multiple rounds of Infinite

Flame Orbs followed.

The twin-headed ogres were pushed back toward the center of the flames, and they were screaming in pain.

KUUUUUU.

KUWARRRUC.

Flop. Flop.

[Experiences Increased.]

[Experiences Increased.]

[Level Up!]

“Huu. As expected of high level monsters. I leveled up even though I hunted only two.”

Vulcan disengaged the Fire Wall which was still burning in full force.

Because Vulcan used the Magic Mirror to isolate the battle area from the world, there were no other monsters that heard the battle

and came toward him from the nearby area.

Vulcan approached the dead bodies of the twin-headed ogres, which were well roasted from the flames, and picked up the items. The items were going to be handed over to Jake, but Vulcan was in a pretty good mood because he just gained a lot of experiences.

With a smiley face, Vulcan took care of the cleanup and looked toward Jake.

“What do you think? Are you happy with the investment?”

“... You were far more amazing than I ever thought!”

## Chapter 24 - An Investor (Part 3)

---

“Honestly, I didn’t believe the rumor about you fighting Uruo by yourself. If it was one vs. one, then perhaps, but that bastard is not the type that goes anywhere alone.”

“In that case, were you thinking I must have teamed up with someone? I don’t even know anyone.”

“Don’t know anyone? What do you mean you don’t? I thought you said you trained together with Dokgo Hoo?”

“Ah, there is that guy.”

It has not even been two weeks, but it felt like Vulcan had not seen him for a very long time.

‘It must be because there were a lot of incidents and accidents.’

“Anyway, I fought Uruo and his men by myself.”

“Okay. I believe you. Although it is still hard for me to believe that you fought Lee Jungyup.”

“It wasn’t like we actually fought. He backed out first.”

“Is that so? Hm... Well the way that man thinks is incomprehensible to begin with. Ah, this is not the important

part.”

From his inventory, Jake brought out a paper that was folded up and then some. Vulcan peeked a glance at it to observe. It was a map.

“With your level of skills, it shouldn’t be a problem for you to go deep inside the south gate field while keeping me safe, right?”

“Um... I am confident, but still, can we go to a place with fewer monsters appearing at the area?”

Honestly, Vulcan was feeling a little uneasy about it.

At Jake’s level, even a scratch from any monster in the south gate area would mean death to him.

“Of course. Even I know my life is precious. Stay alert as you follow me.”

“I will.”

“Mana Armor, Eagle Lightning.”

After casting protective spells on Jake, Vulcan also activated a detection skill.

As Jake lead the way with confident steps, Vulcan followed his back like an attendant.

Jake was not joking about having lived in Beloong City for a long time.

Along the journey, there were hardly any monsters showing aggression toward Vulcan and Jake. Once in a blue moon, there were twin headed ogres charging at them, but the monsters were neutralized easily.

Most of the monsters were roaming about the area alone instead in groups. In the south gate field, where the monsters always outnumber the people, Vulcan found it to be miraculous that their walk through the area was so uneventful.

It was just about when they could no longer see any monsters or people.

They arrived at the destination safely. Before they realized, the scenery, which used to be a greenfield, had changed to dry soils. Also, there were things that caught Vulcan's eyes. Five large stones, like something from stories about ancient ruins, were raised up in pentagon shape.

“We are here.”

“There is nothing here though.”

Really, besides the stones, there was nothing else here.

Let alone monsters, there wasn't even a Max Level Tree which was usually very common. It was just a wasteland.

Jake ignored Vulcan's comment, which had a bit of a complaint mixed in. Instead, Jake brought out a wooden pot and a crusher. The wooden pot's inner surface was stained in blood, and that made Vulcan very suspicious about its use.

"Mr. Jake. Just what are these..."

Vulcan asked to solve his curiosity, but soon his face turned to stone.

CRUSH!

Before Vulcan realized, there were several goblin and orc hands. With an unidentified scroll placed inside the pot, Jake started to put pressure into to crushing them.

CRUSH! CRUSH!

SCRATCH... SCRATCH...

Blood drops splashed to Jake's face every time he crushed the contents.

Perhaps Vulcan was mistaking it, but after a while, Jake's expressionless face suddenly showed a sign of a faint smile. Regardless, having witnessed a macabre side of Jake, Vulcan took a step back.

CRUSH! CRUSH!

Broken bits of the monsters' body parts were gradually turning into smaller pieces.

Jake had been working on crushing the contents for a while, and now he laid down the crusher and took a breath. Smiling with a satisfaction, Jake looked toward Vulcan.

“Um? Hey, why are you acting like that?”

“... I should be the one to ask that question, Mr. Jake. What in the world are you doing? Are you here to bury dead bodies?”

Jake gave a blank stare at Vulcan for a moment and broke into a laughter.

“Haha. That's not it. I didn't explain what I was going to do before I started, so I can understand how you got the wrong idea. Still, since it is almost done, I will explain later. Injecting mana.”

Jake put his hand toward the pot and injected his mana into the pot.



Mana flowing out of Jake's hand touched the contents inside it. Now curious, Vulcan watched Jake with an anticipation on what's about to unfold.

About one minute had passed.

Having completed mana injection, Jake pulled his hand away from the pot, and immediately, red light started to pour out of the pot.

The mysterious and ominous light, which had tint closer to that of blood, gradually grew in size. Eventually, it became an oval that was big enough for a person to walk through. Looking at the oval shaped light, Jake said,

“This will be your hunting ground from now on.”

“...By chance, was all that for summoning?”

“The process is a little off-putting, isn't it?”

Jake laughed out big time. Vulcan responded,

“It is more than a little off-putting. That, do I need to do that every time I come here?”

“You know very well. I will lend you the pot and the crusher. I

will also give you the ingredients later.”

THUMP.

ROLLROLLROLLROLL.

The pot and the crusher, which still had blood and flesh on them, rolled toward Vulcan’s feet. Vulcan stepped back a little and objected,

“Is something this cumbersome really necessary? It is not like there is a shortage of monsters in the south gate’s hunting grounds.”

“It is worth the effort.”

Jake stepped in close to Vulcan and whispered in his ears. It wasn’t like there was anyone around to listen, so Vulcan thought Jake was over doing it, but he was surprised by what Jake had to say.

“This place... It is a place of a hidden quest.”

“... There are others besides the main quest?”

“I do not know if there are more, but this place is definitely one. I know because I went in there once.”

Looking at the portal, Jake added,

“Well, you will know once you enter, but a quest notification will come up. The monster levels are around 350. I don’t know about the boss. I only went up to the entrance with my master and came back. My master was also the one that told me about this place.”

“You also have a master?”

“I use to. He went to Act 2 now. Well, it is not like he taught me any fighting techniques. To explain, he was more like a benefactor who found me a reason to live in this place. I learned the ropes in merchant business from him.”

Jake’s eyes were looking nostalgic. He looked like he might be thinking about his past. Although Vulcan wanted to hear more explanation right away, he wanted to be considerate to Jake, so Vulcan waited. A moment later, Jake regained his focus on the matter at hand and continued the explanation.

“Oh, I was getting nostalgic for a moment. Sorry about that. Now where was I... Oh right. The monsters in this place are incredibly agile. They don’t have weapons or armors, but instead, their claws and teeth are extremely sharp. It looked like there are many of them... and it also looked like they regenerate when you re-enter after exiting the dungeon. Actually, I thought I would never have a reason to tell anyone about this place. Well, also, it is not like I could clear this dungeon myself.”

“If there are a lot of monsters here, isn’t that even better for your

benefit, Mr. Jake? The people you invested in the past...”

“Would there have been anything dropping from slaying monsters that aren’t carrying any weapons or armors? I’m telling you about this place because you are a Player.”

“Ah, that’s right.”

Vulcan felt it again, but it was a very useful ability of the SYSTEM.

Having finished his explanation, Jake brought out goblin’s and orc’s hands and a stack of scrolls and handed them over to Vulcan. Vulcan quickly put away the monsters’ hands and read the scroll’s instruction.

[Expendable Item – Return Scroll]

\*Usable only during non-combat. Can teleport to the Beloong City’s main plaza.

“This...”

“Like how I showed you earlier, put one orc, one goblin, and one scroll in to the pot and crush them to fine pieces. After that, inject the pot with your mana, and the gate to the ‘Abandoned Dungeon’ will open. Those scrolls are pretty expensive, so be thankful.”

Before Vulcan realized, Jake was explaining as he held a cigarette on his mouth and tore a scroll. Vulcan nodded lightly.

“Thank you. I will use them well.”

“As for the items you find, give them to me whenever you visit me at the town.”

Jake waved his hand to say his goodbye for now, and he disappeared with a blue light.

For a moment, Vulcan looked at the space where Jake disappeared from, and then he redirected his gaze toward the red portal.

Just looking at the portal gave Vulcan the chills.

Devilish aura of unknown origin was pasted all over it, but there was no other choice.

“Shall I get going then.”

Vulcan took a deep breath and slowly entered the portal.

[Quest Generated!]

[Hidden Quest – Defeat the King Cheetah, the Abandoned Dungeon’s Boss Monster.]

[Difficulty – C Rank (Asgard’ Standard)]

[Reward – A Choice from skills or items.]

An abandoned dungeon that could be accessed from the Belong City’s south gate field. Defeat King Cheetah, its boss monster.

\*Level restriction for entering the boss’s room – 300Lv (380Lv or above recommended)

\*King Cheetah is incredibly fast and tough. Be cautious when it is angry.

“It really gave me a quest.”

Ever since coming to Asgard, Vulcan had been disappointed because there weren’t any instances of even ordinary quests, let alone a hidden one. Seeing a quest coming up on the SYSTEM’s screen really brightened Vulcan’s mood.

“Well, although I won’t even be able to try beating it until I get to level 300.”

The boss's room would be locked until Vulcan earned the qualification to enter.

Vulcan directed his gaze toward the part that described rewards.

Vulcan liked the description. There was the fact that he could choose one from many options, and the one thing he liked in particular was the fact that skills are one of the options.

‘If I had to choose from skills and items, I’m definitely going to go with a skill.’

Vulcan learned numerous magic spells from training under Beruneru. However, he still could not suppress his greed toward skills. There had to be many powerful skills out there that Beruneru doesn't know about. Naturally, Vulcan raised his expectations.

In comparison, he was not so interested in items. It was because Vulcan already had bountiful sponsorship from Jake that he could use up to level 450.

In his mind, Vulcan firmly decided to choose a skill from the rewards no matter what.

‘Ah, before I start the quest... there was one thing I was going to think over.’

“Hellfire.”

Vulcan cast Hellfire through the SYSTEM.

After taking a moment to check the conditions of his body, Vulcan disengaged the magic and cast Hellfire through the flow of traditional magic.

Hellfire was burning blue from its high heat. Feeling its warmth, Vulcan thought,

‘As I thought, the mental and physical burdens of activating the magic are substantially less with the SYSTEM.’

When Vulcan was learning magic from Beruneru, he heard lectures about the ‘shortcomings of magic cast through the SYSTEM’ until they were nailed to his ears.

However, it was an assessment by Beruneru who could only observe the magic cast through the SYSTEM from the outside.

As for Vulcan, the one who almost reached the peak in both the SYSTEM and traditional magic, he assessed that both methods have advantages.

The greatest advantage of the traditional method was being able to cast spells without speaking the commands.



Through the traditional method, Berunaru demonstrated his ability to make magic to appear before anyone could figure out what was being cast. From watching him, Vulcan could certainly understand why Berunaru thinks of casting magic through the SYSTEM as garbage.

Compared to casting the magic through the SYSTEM with command words, the traditional method required substantially more of mental focus and mana. However, being able to cast magic clandestinely and rapidly more than made up for those shortcomings.

On the other hand, the advantage of the SYSTEM method was the fact that it was easy.

As long as the command codes were said, magic could be cast without any concentration or will power. This could come in handy in case Vulcan got mentally exhausted from excessive use of magic.

Vulcan thought the 'easy' factor of the SYSTEM method was a great advantage.

'Of course, although it has a serious drawback.'

There was the fact that the SYSTEM method required the command codes, and there was also the fact that magic cast through the SYSTEM could not be controlled to the level of precision possible with the traditional magic.

Of the two, the first one was a serious drawback that really could not be excused. There was no other penalty bigger than this in a critical moment or duel.

However, a few days ago, Vulcan met a man that partially solved that problem.

The leader of the Players Alliance, Uruo.

He showed Vulcan a brand-new way of utilizing the SYSTEM.

‘It is just that I never thought about trying. I’m sure I can do it. When it comes to understanding of magic, I am beyond comparison to Uruo. If I just took a moment to invest on understanding it...’

Vulcan went over the battles he had with the Players Alliance a few days ago.

Uruo’s battle tactics came to mind, how he minimized the length of the skill commands, and on top of that, how he actively interfered with Vulcan’s use of skill commands.

Also, Vulcan was thinking that, with his knowledge, it should be possible for him to cast magic through the SYSTEM without speaking any command codes.

“Hm.”

Vulcan disengaged the Hellfire that was floating around and looked toward the gate leading to the dungeon.

A gate with engraving of an unknown beast's form came into his view.

However, Vulcan decided to postpone going into the gate for a while.

“For now, should I just check the potential first?”

Vulcan plumped down and went over the battle against Uruo once more.

Going over every little detail that he just skimmed through last time, he analyzed everything and tried hard to understand them all. Vulcan gradually fell into a world of his own.

Within the abandoned dungeon, Vulcan's lone training started.

# Chapter 25 - Rapid Growth

---

The development on the SYSTEM was progressing faster than Vulcan had expected.

Still, it was no surprise considering that, from the start, Vulcan's understanding of skills was the best among all Players.

He just needed an opportunity and a cause, and the battle against Uruo satisfied these conditions.

It had been three days since Vulcan focused only on utilizing magic through the SYSTEM. Vulcan finally succeeded in activating magic through the SYSTEM without saying the command codes.

It was just a basic Fireball, but it was a monumental leap in comparison to needing to utter the command codes.

Since then, Vulcan started to rapidly figure out how to perform the voiceless activation of other magic through the SYSTEM. By the tenth day, he figured out all of them.

“Hm...”

Vulcan sat in meditation pose and watched the Hellfires floating around him.

He did not like something about them.

After disengaging the spells, Vulcan got right up.

‘What’s the point of making it voiceless. It is useless like this.’

The satisfaction of achieving voiceless activation, a feat that even Uruo have not accomplished, was short-lived.

Vulcan realized there is a serious error in the process of voiceless activation.

“It is taking too long to cast spells...”

It was fine for simple magic such as the Fireball and Lightning. It only took Vulcan a few tries to learn how to use them with ease, eventually to the point where it was as easy, quick and simple as breathing. However, as for mid-level and higher magic, it was a different story.

Even for the Infinite Flame Orb, it felt like there was a delay in the activation. As for magic of Super Heated Inferno’s levels, the delay was taking one to two seconds of preparation time.

Also, this was after Vulcan got better at it from repeated training.

Of course, this was still significantly better than having to utter the command codes carefully, but Vulcan could not help but to feel disappointed.

‘I think I might be able to if I practice just a little bit more...’

Vulcan was not certain about it. It was just a feeling.

He also felt that it would be a waste of time to keep on training based on that gut feeling alone. He could have been spending that time on leveling up.

“Ah, I don’t know anymore. I’ll just think about it as I hunt.”

Vulcan took grumpy steps toward the marble stone door, and he forcibly opened the door. He could see a pathway that was wide enough for ten people to go through all together.

Also, he could see shadowy figures of humanoids.

Vulcan decided to catch two birds with one stone.

“As I gain experiences and face challenges from real combat, I will eventually be able to do what I cannot right now.”

‘You are the type that gets better with tougher training!’

Vulcan could almost hear Bereneru yelling those words.

Vulcan peeked a smile.

With a blade on his hand, Vulcan dashed toward the shadowy figures.

\*\*\*

From the ceiling to the floor, from the floor to the sidewalls, the monsters were moving around freely with speed and agility.

They were moving as if they were not affected by the gravity. However, standing in middle of the monsters, Vulcan was keeping calm.

He was standing still with no intent for pre-emptive strike.

Watching Vulcan standing like that, a humanoid monster targeted him from his behind.

BOOM!

However, it ended in failure. Before the monster's sharp claw could reach Vulcan's back, a ball of flame appeared in midair, collided with the monster and caused an explosion. The only consolation for the monster from the failed attempt was causing a light cut on Vulcan's cape. In the end, there was no effective damage on Vulcan.

KAAAOOO.

Despite seeing one of their allies faltering from the injuries, the rest of them were still not showing any sign of hesitation in their movements.

Instead, they were roaring even more violently and bouncing around all over the places.

Like predator targeting a prey, they looked vicious and dangerous.

However, Vulcan was still standing there as before. Despite watching the injured monster rejoining the ranks of others and assuming a formation, Vulcan was still not showing any signs of intent for making a move.

Vulcan looked at the monsters that were busy moving around to surround him.

[Cheetahman]

[350Lv]

\*Resident of the Abandoned Dungeon. Has the head of a cheetah on a human's body. Swift attacks utilizing its superior physical abilities of feline predator is the monster's specialty.



[Superior Cheetaman]

[360Lv]

\*A type slightly superior to an ordinary Cheetaman.

‘These guys are perfect for my training.’

Vulcan was utilizing Cheetahman’s swift movements to train his voiceless magic through the SYSTEM.

Against Cheetahmen viciously charging toward him, Vulcan was trying to keep them on check using only the voiceless magic through the SYSTEM. The idea was trying to defend himself this way in order to get accustomed to the SYSTEM and reduce the activation delay.

Vulcan was thinking that he might get used to the new magic activation method if he forced himself into dangerous and critical moments in middle of a battle. It was a rather single-minded and crude training method.

To make himself nervous, Vulcan disabled the ‘dodge’ function on the SYSTEM, the one thing that handles majority of his defensive measures. By this point, it was not wrong to say that his training regime was beyond crude but rather reckless.

However, the effectiveness of the training method was certainly

worth the danger.

Vulcan was getting used to the new magic activation method at a much faster rate than he was when he trained by himself at the entrance.

KUWAAAK.

**KHAAANG**

Until now, Cheetahmen were only throwing light attacks as if they were just testing Vulcan or just getting warmed up. Now, their attitude changed. Their eyes were full of murderous intent that conveyed their willingness to bite and tear apart the opponent in front of them.

Cheetahmen were restlessly moving around Vulcan to confuse him, and now they suddenly targeted both sides of Vulcan. In their crunched pose, a stance unique to carnivore predators, the femoral region of their legs swelled up as if they were about to burst.

**BAM**

**KUAKANG**

Cheetahmen leaped toward Vulcan with an immense force, enough to almost break apart the surface. They were just about to

tear apart Vulcan's body.

At that moment, balls of flames emerged from both of Vulcan's palms.

**KIREREREK**

**KUAKANG**

A Cheetahman charging at Vulcan's left side got struck by three of fist-sized fireballs and fell to the side. Because it was a counter attack, the Cheetahman incurred a substantial damage, and its head exploded, turning into experience points for Vulcan.

However, one Cheetahman still lived. With its superb reflex, the last Cheetahman jumped to the air before the magic attack could touch it.

It was just about when the Cheetahman was going to charge at Vulcan by stepping against the ceiling.

A lightning bolt from Vulcan's blade made a direct impact to its head.

**KWAAANG**

# KURURUNG

The Cheetahman lost its consciousness and collapsed to the floor. By the time it lifted its head back up, it was already buried under fireballs surrounding it.

[Experience points went up.]

[Level Up!]

“Phew... Certainly, killing the higher-level one was a little more tedious.”

Vulcan’s forehead was littered with sweats from the battle. He wiped his forehead with his sleeve.

The Cheetahmen were relatively fragile, but their attacks were incredibly powerful, so every moment of the battle was constantly nerve wrecking for Vulcan.

However, thanks to that, Vulcan was now able to use voiceless activation for up to mid-level magic. It could be said that this was a huge success for his training.

A smile of satisfaction formed near Vulcan’s mouth.

“As expected, when it comes to training, I am most efficient during the real combat.”

Staring in to the opponent's eyes, feeling the tension when the blade makes contact, with each strike and attack aimed to extinguish the life of each other, the real combat was deadly, violent and exhilarating for Vulcan. Also, being the last man standing after breaking through it all gave Vulcan a new excitement from battle that he had not felt when he was in Lubel Continent.

Now, he was at the point of enjoying these close-call combats. It was almost strange how Vulcan managed to sit quiet and train under Bereneru all that time instead of running off to fight monsters instead.

Vulcan was giving a blank stare into the space, reminiscing about his old times like a college student thinking about his days in high school senior year. Upon realizing this, Vulcan lightly slapped himself on his face.

‘Looks like I am starting to go insane from being in this world for way too long.’

It was because he realized that the thoughts he was having were something only those completely addicted to the thrill of combat would say.

Vulcan got a grip on himself and went to where the Cheetahmen fell to collect the items. Then he headed toward deep into the

dungeon.

“If I keep on practicing, I should be able to adapt to the voiceless magic through the SYSTEM for the high-level magic.”

Sound of Vulcan’s firm steps echoed through the dungeon.

\*\*\*

It had been three months since Vulcan started hunting in the Abandoned Dungeon.

Initially, Jake complained to Vulcan because there weren’t many high-level items, but nowadays, Jake spent the days in contentment and he could not stop himself from smiling.

From the day Vulcan started his training, items were pouring in to Jake, and thanks to that, his business was booming everyday. The residents of the Beloong City were breaking equipments all the time from battles, so the items always sold out before they could pile up. In return, they filled up Jake’s pockets.

Vulcan, the one that essentially handed Jake bags full of money, also achieved substantial growth.

First of all, his level increased a lot.

Level 265, a Second-Rate Magic Swordsman.

It was an amazing growth. Now, he could say with confidence that he is a mid-class in the Beloong City. However, from Vulcan's perspective, there was a bigger achievement that was more important than the levels.

## **FWOOSH**

Three Hellfires, that were formed at an instant, flew toward a Cheetahman in a straight line. Cheetahman, which was surrounded by the Firewall and not able to escape, stood around without knowing what to do until the death came for it.

Watching Cheetahman's corpse burning with crackling noise, Vulcan made a satisfied smile.

'Now it is possible to use even the high-level magic without delay!'

Although Vulcan still had delay with top-level magic such as the Super Heated Inferno or the Thunder God's Might, what he accomplished so far was still significant.

As long as there was mana left, with the voiceless activation of skills, he was able to pour out unlimited number of Hellfire without straining his mental focus.

If other mages heard this, they would have screamed foul on

Vulcan's increase in specs.

“You are hunting at such a rate. It is no wonder there are so many items pouring in.”

Jake said as he smoked cigarette.

“It is dangerous. Why did you follow me?”

“Because I was curious just how you are hunting them. By the way, you, you can cast magic without utterance? It is just like mages from the Powel.”

“I have a few talents.”

“Huh, you became quite arrogant. When I saw you for the first time, your appearance just screamed newbie. Now, no matter who looks at you, you certainly look like a resident of Asgard. By the way, is it okay to show me your voiceless magic casting techniques?”

After checking the items obtained from the hunt just now, Vulcan responded nonchalantly.

“If I was going to hide it, I wouldn't have let you tag along in the first place. Anyway, because Uruo lived, anyone that would be interested in it probably would know by now.”



“Oh, but I didn’t know about it.”

“You are so busy with your business that perhaps your eyes for information went dark for the moment.”

“Haha. Even now, I still think investing in you was a great idea.”

Jake opened his shoulders wide with an invigorating laughter. He added casually,

“After seeing your abilities, I am not that worried, but still, be careful.”

“... Did something happen?”

“It is not that something happened, but something could happen.”

“What could happen?”

“It is nothing specific, but people like you, who get stronger rapidly, are on receiving end of pestering that never seem to cease.”

“Is that all? You are just saying you have a bad feeling, right?”

“Actually, I have seen a few cases of people that had steep and

rapid growths but then became roadkills. I am saying this as a senior resident of Asgard, so please hear me out.”

Jake smoked the cigarette frugally, all the way to the end, where it was almost burning his hand. He then waved his hand toward Vulcan and disappeared using the portal scroll. After watching Jake heading back to the town through the portal, Vulcan turned back without any after thought.

Vulcan didn't take Jake's advice seriously, but he didn't take it lightly either.

It would be foolish to ignore an advice from a man who managed to establish himself in Baloong City through his merchant business alone. However, it was not Vulcan's style to obsess and worry over the weight of such a person's advice either.

‘I just need to do what I can do.’

Becoming stronger through the training and leveling up was his current objective. By becoming stronger, handling dangers would become that much easier. Also, doing so increased his chance of returning home safely.

‘Is there anything else that I should mind?’

None.

Vulcan thought that he only had to keep on doing what he had

been. He only had to move forward diligently and continue giving it his absolute best.

Vulcan did a light stretch and ran forward without any hesitation. Five Cheetahmen revealed their sharp teeth toward Vulcan.

‘Within 3 months... Level 300!’

Is that going to be a little too much?

It didn’t matter to Vulcan.

He never did anything half-assedly.

# Chapter 26 - Rapid Growth (Part 2)

---

There were flames everywhere. Instead of using careful control, Vulcan randomly cast the Firewalls all over the place and turned the Abandoned Dungeon into Hell.

One after the other, the Cheetahmen that had nowhere to run came to attack the caster, but their efforts were wasted. The Hellfires being produced endlessly were gunning for them like the bullets of a sniper.

BOOM.

KRUWAAANG.

**BABAAM**

**KIYAAANG**

[Experience points went up.]

[Experience points went up.]

[Level Up!]

“All right. All right.”

Vulcan hummed a song and enjoyed slaughtering Cheetahmen.

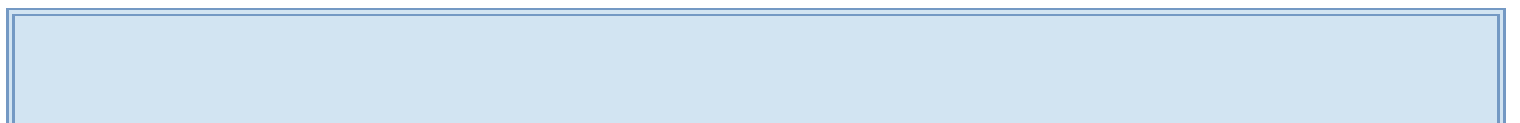
Ever since the SYSTEM progressed, the hunt became too easy. Without any concern for mental strain, Vulcan was now able to continuously cast high-level magic. As of result, the hunting speed increased exponentially.

The rate of mana depletion was not even worth worrying about. Whenever Vulcan was just about to run out of mana, he used the specialty mana potion from Bereneru’s general store, and then he spent the mana away like water. Thanks to Jake’s sponsorship, Vulcan had plenty of potion in his inventory.

The confine of the limited space within the dungeon was also an advantage to Vulcan. Because Firewalls caused damage to monsters over time, casting them all over the place resulted in Cheetahmen dying by themselves. As for the ones coming at Vulcan, he only had to repel them back into the Firewalls using either the Hellfire or the Infinite Flame Orb.

It could be said that this was the pinnacle of the most expedient and efficient hunt.

Right at this moment, that brilliant achievement was transformed into numbers and was shining in front of Vulcan.



[First-Rate Magic Swordsman Vulcan]

[301Lv]

Health – 493(438 + 55)

Mana – 717(617 + 100)

Physical Attack Power – 1001(891 + 110)

Magic Attack Power – 1528(1378 + 150)

Stamina – 770(720 + 50)

Vulcan’s stats increased to over four times of what he had when he first set foot on Asgard.

It was an amazing growth. If he could meet his former self, Vulcan felt that he probably could neutralize him with just one finger.

Although he could not make a direct comparison, the Fireball that Vulcan had now could be more powerful than the Hellfire that he had back then.

Besides the improved stats, there was one thing that drew his

attention.

It was none other than the title of 'First-Rate.'

The truth to be told, this was making him more excited than the stats.

'At last... Finally I am a First-Rate!'

First-Rate Magic Swordsman Vulcan.

It felt incredibly good. He could not hide the smile that constantly came to his face.

Since coming to Asgard for the first time, Vulcan thought about how he was subjected to a Third-Rate treatment for nearly three years. The memories flashed by him like a kaleidoscope.

Of course, when the masteries were considered, which was increased from the training, at least Vulcan's abilities could be said as beyond the First-Rate and actually at the Zenith's level.

However, although he wanted to proclaim, 'My true abilities is not Third-Rate!', whenever Vulcan opened the SYSTEM window and saw the title of 'Third-Rate,' it only made him sigh.

Now that he was officially acknowledged as a First-Rate by the SYSTEM, Vulcan felt like he could fly away.

“All right! I’m going to keep up this momentum and go straight to the boss’s room!”

The boss’s room that could not be accessed due to the level limitation was now open.

It had been two months and 20 days. Also, Vulcan went past level 300, which was his target, so there was no reason for him to hesitate clearing the dungeon.

Moreover, Vulcan was full of anticipations due to the fact that this was the first quest that he was challenging since coming to Asgard.

‘I wonder how amazing the reward would be.’

The Super Heated Inferno he received when he was at level 99 was currently Vulcan’s core skill that could be called as his certain-kill technique. The quest he was about to try had the level limit of 300, which was incredible.

On top of that, this was a hidden quest.

It was difficult to not have anticipations.

‘I don’t know when the boss’s room will show up, but I am in pretty deep already... I think I will get there before the end of



today.'

Vulcan gathered the items that Cheetahmen threw up and then headed toward deeper end of the dungeon.

His steps were light as if he already was holding a reward of immense value.

\*\*\*

The door was similar to the marble stone door from the dungeon's front entrance that Vulcan saw in the beginning.

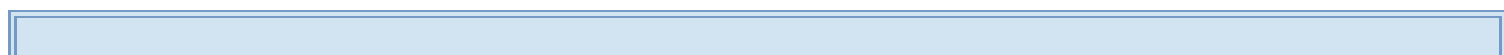
To point out a difference, there was one thing. A shape, that was suspected to be the appearance of the boss, was carved on to the door in great detail.

He could see the Cheetah King solemnly sitting on the throne.

"This bastard, he might be too full of pride."

After observing the door for a while, Vulcan kicked it open and entered the room.

Inside the room, the Cheetah King, sitting exactly like the engraving on the door, greeted Vulcan.



[Cheetah King]

[400Lv]

\*King of all Cheetahmen. Attacks with substantially greater speed and sharpness. Has toughness that cannot be seen from ordinary Cheetahmen.

Unlike the Devil Goblin, the Cheetah King was by himself without a single minion. It carefully removed his crown and cape, placed them on the throne, then it suddenly charged at Vulcan.

‘It is fast.’

Its speed was far superior to ordinary Cheetahmen.

However, Vulcan had full knowledge of Cheetahmen’s patterns from six months of hunting, therefore the Cheetah King’s speed was not a threat to him.

A Hellfire abruptly formed between Vulcan and the Cheetah King.

The Cheetah King noticed the Hellfire with its superb eyesight, but its incredible speed worked against it.

The Cheetah King got engulfed in the Hellfire without having

any chance to dodge, and it was roughly knocked back. A part of the stoned walled room was destroyed, and stone powders resulting from the damage filled the air.

However, the Cheetah King bounced back up soon. Looking at it, Vulcan made a face as if he was impressed.

“Certainly, unlike the minions, it is tough.”

Even so, it did not appear that defeating the Cheetah King was going to be difficult.

Vulcan activated the Infinite Flame Orbs as he watched the Cheetah King glaring at him with its eyes full of wariness.

Countless spherical fireballs poured out from Vulcan’s hands.

Realizing the situation is taking a turn for worse, Cheetah King made a move again toward Vulcan, but the Hellfire blocked his path yet again. This time, perhaps because he was ready for it, the Cheetah King succeeded in changing his trajectory before colliding with the Hellfire, but that was all it could accomplish. It may have avoided being damaged by the Hellfire, but the situation was still such that there was nothing in its favor.

Vulcan was leisurely pouring out the Infinite Flame Orbs, and the Cheetah King made a ruckus as it watched Vulcan.

Vulcan was already certain about his victory.

# KUWAAAANG

As if it didn't have any good plan, the Cheetah King charged at Vulcan again using the same pattern, and he kept it in check with ease. Because of Vulcan's continuous defense with the Hellfires, the Cheetah King was getting infuriated, enough to make it lose its fur, but it had absolutely no means of dealing effective damage to Vulcan.

Like that, the Cheetah King wasted time away worthlessly, and number of Infinite Flame Orbs grew from hundreds to over several thousand.

At that moment, Vulcan started to firebomb all areas the Cheetah King could move to.

# PAPAPBOOMBOOMBOOMBOOMBOOM

# KHIAAAAAAONG

The Cheetah King was struck by the Infinite Flame Orbs coming from all directions and cried out in pain.

After confirming the Cheetah King collapsing to the floor with its entire body giving off smokes, Vulcan opened the quest log.

“Reward! Reward!”

Even before entering the room, Vulcan only had the reward in his mind. He didn't even wait a moment before opening the quest log.

Vulcan quickly scanned the quest log to find what he wanted.

However, the reward he was looking for was not there.

The hidden quest description was still there stating that it was incomplete. Confused, Vulcan said,

“Uh? What? Why isn't the quest complete?”

KUWRUWAAAAAK!

Hearing the abrupt beastly roar made Vulcan's head to make a rapid turn toward the direction. Vulcan terminated the quest window, which was getting in the way of his sight, and assumed a combat stance again.

The Cheetah King's muscles were bulked up as if he got an instant effect from a shot of a steroid, and its eyes were turned red.

It was giving off a substantially more dangerous vibe than before. It was exuding vicious and murderous aura toward Vulcan.

“It didn’t die yet. Is it time for the round two?”

Regardless, other than increase in its speed and defense, there wouldn’t be much to it, or so Vulcan thought.

Vulcan focused all of the remaining Infinite Flame Orbs at the Cheetah King.

He figured that as long as one of them hits the Cheetah King, its stance will falter, and then he could have the remaining Infinite Flame Orbs rain down on it. Just in case, Vulcan also had three Hellfires prepared.

At an instant, Vulcan made the situation into his pace.

However, like phlegm sometimes stuck inside the neck, an unpleasant feeling surrounded Vulcan’s entire body.

Vulcan did not ignore his own intuition. Even when the Infinite Flame Orb made a direct impact to the back of the Cheetah King’s head, Vulcan still did not let go of his guard.

And then, Vulcan’s intuition, about having a bad feeling on what could happen, turned out to be right.

**PABOOM**

# KUWAAAANG

“...!”

The Cheetah King was not knocked back by the impact at all. Instead, it continued its charge toward Vulcan.

It was completely different from before, where it lost its balance whenever it was hit by a magic attack.

Vulcan quickly launched the Hellfires that he had prepared earlier.

BOOMBOOMBOOM.

# KRUGAGAGAK

However, it was insufficient to slow down the Cheetah King, which was extremely agitated at the moment.

The Cheetah King was not even bothering with clawing away the Hellfire with its front legs. It just charged straight on toward Vulcan while colliding with Hellfire with its body. Watching the Cheetah King's behavior, Vulcan gave up on his plan for shooting lightning bolts.

The situation was not where the jolts from lightning attacks

would work.

The Cheetah King was displaying might like a berserker in middle of a war's battlefield, something that could ignore every attack and all abnormalities unless the damage was severe enough to bring it close to the brink of death.

‘Is he in super armor mode?’

It could not be explained by anything else.

Vulcan used the dodge ability for the first time since he made progression on the SYSTEM.

## KUAANG

The Cheetah King glazed Vulcan and collided hard with the stone-walled room's interior.

As of result, its forehead was bleeding from a cut, but it was smiling with its fangs out. It didn't appear to have taken a serious damage. It seemed that in order to kill the Cheetah King, Vulcan would have to pour in magic for a very long time.

Of course, that was not a problem for Vulcan.

Vulcan was thinking that he could continue dodging the Cheetah



King's charging attacks like just now, and regardless of it losing balance or not, as long as Vulcan continued to firebomb the Cheetah King with magic, even its health would show its limits.

The idea was that, as long as Vulcan kept it up and repeated the process, time would come where even the Cheetah King would collapse.

However...

‘Saying I’m a disgrace, you bastard.’

A runt that only runs away. Avoiding a fair and square duel, you are a runt that only throws childish fireworks.

Although Vulcan couldn't communicate with it, he could tell that it was laughing at and belittling Vulcan.

It was thinking that Vulcan was a coward that avoids a head on duel.

Vulcan was not the type that fell for provocations easily.

However, he was also not the type that would just ignore a provocation from a weakling that didn't know its place.

“Thunder God's Might.”

The Thunder God's Might activated to its full capacity encompassed Vulcan's entire body.

Vulcan felt exhilarating sensation as if every cell on his body was awakened. He took a quick draw blade technique stance.

It was an extremely steady stance, but the power of an immense magnitude, like a bow drawn all the way to its limits, could be felt from it.

The Cheetah King crunched for a moment, but smiled again and leaped toward Vulcan with all of its might.

The Cheetah King had never seen anyone that was faster than it. It was certain that its claws will reach the opponent's heart first.

After a hundredth of a second had passed, when the Cheetah King's fully extended front leg's claws were just about to pierce into Vulcan's upper body, a flash of blade emerging from Vulcan's left side sliced through the Cheetah King's waist.

A faint red line decorated the Cheetah King's body. That faint line eventually became a thicker line, and soon, like a broken dam, blood started to pour out of its body.

Like an ice statue that was cut clean, the Cheetah King's upper body slid off and fell.

Vulcan stared down at the corpse of Cheetah King. He could see

its lifeless eyes.

“Maybe you lost touch on figuring out the strength of your opponents because you have been a king in your dungeon for all this time.”

Vulcan cleaned the blood from his blade by wiping it on the Cheetah King’s furry hide, and he added another line.

“Even provocation should be done after knowing whom you are doing it to.”

[Experience points went up.]

[Level Up!]

[Hidden Quest – Abandoned Dungeon’s Boss Monster, Defeat the Cheetah King, Complete!]

[Please select your reward.]

As soon as Vulcan finished his one-liner, the notification alarm from the SYSTEM indicating the level up and quest completion could be heard.

Vulcan took a deep breath as he drew his gaze away from the

Cheetah King's corpse.

Although it was postponed for a while, but in the end, Vulcan succeeded in completing the hidden quest safely.

Now, all he had to do was reap the fruit of his labor, and then the six months of his life in the dungeon would come to an end. He was suddenly not tired at all. Instead, he was filled with excitement and anticipation.

“Now, should I check out the rewards list...”

Vulcan was just about to go and select the reward, but he squinted his eyes in response to bright light pouring out from the floor.

It was not just bright. A sense of holiness could be felt from the rays of light.

Wondering what it was, Vulcan took a look at the floor, and then his face turned to stone.

“...”

Vulcan carefully bent his back and picked up a blade that was glowing with heavenly light.

A brilliantly white blade. An archaic design.

Having lost his mind at the sight of the blade's beauty, Vulcan murmured,

“A Legendary... Weapon...?”

## Chapter 27 - Rapid Growth (Part 3)

---

Everything in Asgard is special.

Its residents are mostly undefeated champions from their own worlds. Even trees are monster trees with levels over 100. Vagrant Goblins, which are treated as peanuts, are powerful monsters with levels over 90.

It was the same with items. The legendary or renowned swords from ordinary dimensions paled in comparison to axes carried by ordinary Orcs here, which have better quality and sturdiness. Also, even these incredible weapons had to settle for titles such as ‘superior’ or ‘grand.’

However, a legendary weapon appeared in front of Vulcan.

It was a weapon that was treated as the best even in Asgard’s strict and hefty standard.

It was understandable why Vulcan couldn’t get a hold of himself from the excitement.

Vulcan was completely mesmerized by the incredible beauty of the blade. He carefully read the description about the blade on the window.

[Legendary Weapon – Heavenly Lightning Blade]

[Level Limit: 470Lv]

[Mastery Limit: Lightning Mastery Rank S or Above]

Attack Power + 690

Indestructible

Attack Speed + 20%

Movement Speed + 5%

Lightning Type Skill's Damage + 30%

Lightning Type Training's Efficiency + 20%

\*A lightning type blade bestowed by a Thunder God of an ancient legend to a brave warrior who saved the humanity. Substantially increases the damage of lightning type skills.

“ ... ”

The blade possessed attack power and additional attributes that were simply jaw dropping.

Vulcan opened his inventory and brought out a level 450 blade he rented from Jake.

It was a grand weapon, 'Arming Sword of Thunder Spirit,' which was exuding a mysterious blue light. Its attack power was 478. The vast difference made Vulcan almost sorry for even comparing the two.



Vulcan shouted out loud,

“I HIT THE JACKPOT!”

It was the first taste of finding a real treasure since he came to Asgard. It melted away all of the hardships Vulcan endured until now.

To begin with, Vulcan never had any luck with items from slaying monsters in the past, so he was not hoping to reap huge benefits from items found from slaying monsters.

He was thinking the same about the Cheetah King. Of course, compared to an ordinary monster, there is a higher probability of getting a higher scale item by defeating a boss monster, but in the end, it was just a possibility, not a certainty.

Moreover, getting a weapon that was exactly to Vulcan's preferences in terms of the weapon's element type and options was more improbable than winning a lottery.

When Vulcan was in Rubel Continent, he had been handling the Pure Lightning Blade with great care like an extension of his body. Even this blade was a hard earned one that he chose among many of the rewards from completing quests.

In conclusion, it was extremely difficult to obtain a desired item from simply slaying a monster. It was harder than picking a star

from the sky.

“My life had been full of only hardships... Now, it seems like things are going to work out...”

After viewing the exquisite beauty of the Heavenly Lightning Blade for a long time, Vulcan finally opened his inventory.

It felt like he would never get bored of looking at the blade, but still, he had one more thing left to do.

‘Actually, this was supposed to be the main goal.’

Because of an item that was way beyond Vulcan’s expectations, he completely forgot about the quest’s reward.

Having remembered his main objective, with his heart pounding out of excitement and anticipation, Vulcan checked the reward. In search of a big score, his eyes were rapidly scanning the list.

“Um...”

Four items and one skill.

The items included a spear, a mace, and an ax. They were the types Vulcan had no use for.

The last item was just an ordinary level 400 grand shoulder armor.

It was better than the armors from Jake, but it was lacking as a reward from completing a quest.

Since that was the case, there was only one viable choice left, which was the skill.

Since Vulcan was intending on choosing the skill over everything else from the start, he just had to pick the skill without giving it a second thought. However, after looking at the skill's description, Vulcan's face was not looking happy.

[Legendary Skill – Beast Transformation (Feline-Type Beast)]

[Level Limit: None]

\*Transform in to a Beastman possessing the special attributes of a feline-type beast. Vastly increases movement and attack speeds. The caster falls into the berserk mode. Has a 10 minutes limit. Has a 24 hours cooling-down time.

Health and physical power: 20% increase

Mana and magic power: 20% decrease

Movement speed and attack speed: 15% increase

Super Armor activated when health decreases below 50%

Cannot equip weapons

The caster falls into the berserk mode

\*Super Armor – Invulnerable to all status abnormality

The skill had advantages and disadvantages that were too distinct and obvious.

The improvements in physical stats towered above what could be expected from Mythical level skills.

However, because Vulcan heavily relied on magic, the skill was about as useless as turkey guts for a Thanksgiving meal.

Of course, there are all sorts of monsters out there, and there would be all sorts of situations to face as well, therefore the Beast Transformation skill could be chosen for the sole purpose of increasing Vulcan's versatility. However... There was one penalty that was pressing down hard on Vulcan's mind.

‘Once transformed... You can't wield any weapons!’

Vulcan, who is a mage and a swordsman, using the skill was like voluntarily tying both of his arms to his back.

Vulcan started to agonize over the decision that needed to be made.

Vulcan's gaze went back and forth between the shoulder armor and the Beast Transformation.

As if he suddenly developed a disability of indecisiveness, Vulcan was stomping around because he was not able to decide. Eventually, he closed his eyes hard and made his choice.

[Legendary Skill – Beast Transformation (Feline-Type Beast) was selected.]

No matter how hard he thought about it, Vulcan felt that it would be a waste to get an armor that he would use only for a while before switching to something else.

The Beast Transformation was a skill with many penalties, but still, even this one could have its use depending on situations.

Vulcan immediately activated the skill for a test drive.

“Beast Transformation.”

UUDUDUDUC.

Unlike his expectations, the transformation didn't take long. At a blink of an eye, Vulcan was transformed into a form similar to a Cheetahman. Vulcan observed his hands.

“These are not hands. They are frontal feet.”

PHICHING, PHICHING.

At will, Vulcan was able to extend and retract claws. It was obvious now. Holding and swinging any weapon was physically impossible with these features.

Vulcan left the boss's room.

He could see a corridor that was completely clear of obstacles. Vulcan's full body was submerged in mysterious excitement and anticipations.

After channeling the energy from the Thunder God's Might, Vulcan dashed forward with all of his strength.

PAPAPAPAPAT.

Vulcan was thrilled by the exhilarating speed that he had never experienced before.

It was a first for Vulcan to feel such a joy from the act of running alone. It felt like he was the owner of an exotic super car on a test

drive on the Autobahn. He wanted to run for hours.

SURURURUK.

After the time limit, the transformation was undone and Vulcan came to a stop. His head, which felt like it was burning up, cooled back down to normal, and his mind calmed to his old self as well.

Vulcan tried moving his hands and feet to check the condition of his body and said,

“This will be perfect when I need to make a run for my life.”

With the skill, Vulcan thought that even a level 600 martial artist would have a hard time catching him.

\*

As usual, the main plaza of Beloong City was crowded with people looking to find party members.

Horuin and Carfield near by the fountain were looking to find party members as well. Looking at other people shouting, Horuin said,

“Are you sure the association sent out the words? Nobody is coming.”



“There were two that said they will come...”

“Is it possible that they are both dead?”

“Still, they are all at the higher end of First-Rate rank... Hm...”

In light of Carfield’s wishy-washy response, Horuin was about to say something, but then,

“Oh, it is a return magic.”

An intense blue light appeared in midair, and a man came through the light.

TADAK.

Having landed on the ground, the man quickly left the main plaza. It appeared that he was headed to the merchants district.

Watching the man leaving, Carfield murmured,

“That’s the guy that Jake is investing on.”

“What are you talking about? Tell me more. I’m bored.”

“This is why I have been telling you to look up the ‘Wiki Crystal’ more often.”

“I don’t like drinking.”

Carfield explained,

“Of all the newbies that came here in past 10 years, I heard that he is one of the two strongest people. Because of his rapid growth, Jake saw a potential in him, so it appears Jake decided to invest on that guy.”

Horuin opened his eyes wide.

“Wasn’t Dokgo Hoo the best? There was another guy that is similar?”

“No, no way. This one is probably not as good as him. Still, I heard that he is incomparable among all newbies. Of all rookies, he is ranked as the second most powerful one.”

Horuin stood up and extended his neck out. He could see Vulcan walking away in the distance.

“He doesn’t look all that strong.”

“That’s the guy that crushed Uruo half a year ago.”

“Ah, that guy who is a Player. If he did that, then he certainly deserves the high ranking.”

Horuin was thinking that giving Vulcan the rank of number-one among all rookies would have been just as fine at this point.

Although Uruo is a Player, Horuin knew Uruo's Amplification Glass Marble is quite useful. Not only does it have a superb destructive power, it is also versatile with various possible applications. Because of this, even those from Powel or Murim didn't dare to take Uruo lightly.

Since Dokgo Hoo, the man currently holding the number-one spot in the rookie ranking, was too powerful to be considered a rookie, Horuin was saying that technically, Vulcan was the number-one among all rookies.

“Uruo must be frustrated. He wants to have his revenge, but because of Jake's influence, he can't do anything about this guy.”

Because Jake continuously supplied quality weapons to people, his influence was bigger than Uruo. Because Jake had connections with people from both Powel and Murim, the Players Alliance had no choice but to keep quiet in fear of repercussion.

“There is Jake, but still, it won't be easy to beat this guy even if the entire Players Alliance went after him all at once.”

“What are you talking about? Even if they are low-levelers, if they combined their forces together, they could be quite fearsome.”

Ofcourse, having just earned the title of Zenith-Rate, Horuin was thinking he could beat them all by himself, but he figured it would be still difficult for a newbie who had been in Asgard for less than 10 years.

‘If he is a Player, he can’t join Murim’s Order of Virtue or Powel’s Holy Denomination either.’

“That runt, I heard that he is on the higher end of the First-Rate.”

In light of Carfield’s words, Horuin’s head turned rapidly towards him.

“What?”

“There are rumors about him being on the starting end of the Zenith-Rate too. Well... I think rumor is exaggerated a bit. Anyway, I get the feeling that he is certainly at least near the high end of the First-Rate.”

Horuin could not believe it. He asked,

“Does that make any sense to you? He is a Player. Even Uruo is considered as a freak, but a newbie Player is approaching the higher end of the First-Rate? Possibly just obtained Zenith-Rate? Wow. You must be only hearing some garbage rumors from the pub.”

“If you are so curious, go connect to the Wiki Crystal. There is quite a debate going on, but most of the people are saying the same thing. That guy is not at a Player’s level.”

Upon hearing Carfield’s explanations, Horuin fell in to a deep thought.

He just stood there like a solid stone statue without any movement. Carfield chose to let Horuin be, and he just watched the people passing by at the main plaza.

Horuin, when he was not eating or taking a dump, was the kind that only thought about battles.

If Powel, the god of war, picked five most diligent followers, Horuin would most definitely be counted among them. He was an extremely committed one.

‘A hard working guy like this one should move on to Act 2.’

However, the reality was not that understanding or generous.

Having had done hard work through blood and sweat, Horuin certainly was a high achiever and commanded as one of the best in Beloong City. However, when it came to overcoming a gigantic wall called Sarantis and then moving forward, only an extreme few with devil’s talent have managed to do so.

Even though both Horuin and Carfield possessed talents that could be seen in a hundred years or more, compared to the greatest of prodigies that cleared Act 1, even these two had shortcomings.

“Hey. It looks like nobody is going to come no matter how long we wait. Let’s just go find someone else. Or we could go to a safer place.”

Carfield said as he stretched big. It was because he figured that there was no point in waiting around any longer.

However, Horuin was still standing there like a statue.

Carfield called him several times, but Horuin was not responding, and that annoyed Carfield a little. He just took a deep breath so he could shout at Horuin, but then, Horuin’s mouth, which was shut for a long time, finally opened.

“Carfield.”

“Uh? Um?”

Having lost his chance to yell at Horuin, Carfield responded awkwardly.

“I am not going to hunt today. You go by yourself.”

“What are you talking about? You rascal.”

Horuin didn't respond to Carfield's words. He merely stepped away.

Horuin was headed to where all the merchants were.

Surprised, Carfield shouted toward Horuin.

"Hey! Where are you going all of sudden, you rascal!"

"I'm going to the shopping district."

"Why there now?"

"To see the guy we just saw."

Surprised again, Carfield said to Horuin,

"Oh man. What are you going to do when you get there? Are you going to confirm for yourself if he really is as powerful as the rumors say? So, what are you going to do even if he really is?!"

Horuin suddenly stopped and turned his head back toward Carfield. Carfield looked like he was caught off-guard by all this. Horuin looked at Carfield and said in a serious tone,

"A duel."

# Chapter 28 - A Super Rookie

---

“Hey! You came!”

Jake ran out through the crowd of people that were gathered like clouds in front of the large stall. Vulcan said in a grumpy way,

“Were you waiting for me or waiting for items?”

“Of course, the items!”

“Still, I’m a human being. Can’t you act like you care?”

“Of course, I will. But why did it take you 5 days to come back? My neck was about to pop out because I was waiting so long. Ah, I will take items first.”

“You were not listening to me carefully just now, were you?”

Vulcan calmed down Jake who was full of greed for the items.

“I have a few things I want to ask you as well. So, I know it is a little early, but let’s go to the pub. Well, if you want to run your shop for a little while longer, I could wait.”

“Really? In that case, please wait just 10 minutes. I will wrap things up and then go with you.”



Jake returned to the stall and labeled prices on all items. Noticing a 10% discount, many of the customers were happy to pay.

The items on the stall were all sold out at an instant. Jake wrapped things up and stood next to Vulcan.

“Now, let's get going.”

“... Is it okay to sell everything so carelessly like that?”

“Actually, they were all just leftovers after selling all of the high-end products. Hurry. Let's get going.”

With Jake urging Vulcan to hurry up, the two went to the pub. Watching Jake having a hard time opening the pub's door, Vulcan said,

“Mr. Jake, it looks like you have no intention of ever leveling up.”

“Ugh. Do they ever think about making this door lighter? That's right. As for me, I never liked beating or killing something. I leveled up to where I am while I was just trying to survive. Now, I'm making a pretty good living, so it doesn't matter anymore.”

“Do you ever think about going back to your home world?”

“Did I never tell you? I was an orphan. Even if I go back, I don't know anyone there, so what is the point? I am comfortable here.”

Vulcan nodded. He could understand Jake.

The pub was rather empty at this hour. Jake found a table and said,

“All right. First let's check the items.”

“That is... How could we do that here? They will fill up the entire pub.”

“You have that many?”

“In the abandoned dungeon, I cleared out everything from the beginning to the end.”

Jake sprang up from his chair.

Because he did it in such a hurry, his chair got knocked over the floor with a loud noise.

“You, by chance, did you complete the quest already?”

“Yes. Why are you so surprised?”

Jake was at a loss for words for a while, but soon he smiled big and said,

“Now that I think about it, you were able to hunt in the south field when you were not even at level 200. Now you're at level 304, so it is very possible. What was the boss's level?”

“It was 400.”

“Wow, your level is at the First-Rate range, but your abilities are already at the Zenith-Rate.”

Impressed, Jake said as he sat back down.

Vulcan felt that it was enough for the introduction. He started to talk about the main part.

"That is why I am saying this. I would like to switch my hunting ground now."

"Already? You're not even at level 350 yet. Why don't you just stay there for the time being?"

"I can feel that my growth rate is slowing down. Even if there are a lot of monsters, there is a limit. I think I would be better off hunting in the north gate side's plain-field."

"Certainly, if you got what it takes, the north gate's side is better

than the abandoned dungeon..."

Jake was holding his chin with his hand. It looked like he was comparing the two hunting grounds.

Interrupting his train of thoughts, Vulcan asked a question.

"Is there a good hunting ground somewhere?"

"What?"

"Is there another place similar to the abandoned dungeon? Please tell me."

Jake cringed.

"Hey. You think places like that are common? Most people don't even know that such places even exist. I knew that one place because I'm pretty knowledgeable."

"So what you're saying is, you don't know any other place."

"That is right. As you said, just go to the north gate field and hunt there."

Vulcan felt genuinely disappointed. A sigh came out automatically.

It was because Vulcan now knew for certain how important a good hunting ground was for leveling up.

'If I hunt on a plain field, would I have been able to get to level 300 so fast?'

Vulcan shook his head. It would have been absolutely impossible.

Besides that, there were many other factors that bugged him.

North gate field was an open environment where anybody could interfere in his battles.

Because Vulcan had enemies called Players Alliance, this factor made him very uncomfortable.

'Well, actually, as I am now, I think I should be able to face them alone and beat them all.'

Still, it was better to avoid dangers that could be avoided.

Although Vulcan sometimes got excited and acted recklessly, he usually preferred to go about his business without risk.

"I don't have the information you want, but there is one thing that I can tell you about something else."

It intrigued Vulcan. In silence, Vulcan looked at Jake.

“You, did you know that there is a ranking in Beloong City?”

“This place is full of people who only fight whole day long, so I figured they like ranking amongst themselves.”

“That’s right. Actually, about half of what people usually talk about in the pub are about ranking.”

“I don’t care about such a thing.”

“Really? Although you are in the ranking?”

After hearing unexpected news, Vulcan leaned toward Jake.

“I didn’t do anything. What did I do to make people add me to the ranking? I have been cooped up in the dungeon and hunting all this time.”

“Didn’t do anything? Was it Beruneru beat the crap out of the Players Alliance?”

“Um...”

Certainly, that was a big incident.

However, Vulcan still could not believe it.

“Even if Uruo is the leader of Players Alliance, he is the top dog of a group that isn’t even acknowledged as a real faction. It is odd that I am treated as worthy of being part of the ranking. It looked like they only select about a hundred people for the ranking.”

“You are rather calm? Usually, when people hear that they are in the ranking, they pump up their shoulders and get smug about it.”

“If I did, I would just get more people trying to pick fights with me. So, how did I end up in the ranking?”

“Let me explain that.”

Before anyone realized, Filder was standing besides the two and joined the conversation.

“Ah, Mr. Filder. It has been a long time.”

“It certainly has. I have barely seen you in the past half a year. Did you just return from training in isolation somewhere?”

“Well... Something like that. By the way, about the explanation...”

Filder smiled gently. It had been a while since Vulcan saw

Filder's smile. Vulcan felt relaxed.

“Beloong City's ranking is divided into two. The first one is the Golden Ranking, which ranks the strongest of all residents in Beloong City. The second one is for those who have been in the city for less than 10 years. It is called the Rookie Ranking.”

“Ah, in that case, the ranking I belong to is...”

“It is the Rookie Ranking.”

In the past, Vulcan was not interested in ranking plays, but after talking about it for so long, he could not help but to be interested.

Vulcan was about to ask additional questions about the ranking, but Filder pointed his finger toward the middle of the pub.

A square shaped crystal glowing in green light could be seen.

“The explanation will get too long if I explained it to you one step at a time. For now, please take a look at that crystal.”

“What is that crystal... Is it not just a decoration?”

“It is called Wiki Crystal. If you touch the crystal with your hand and gently input mana, you could see all kinds of information. Other than explaining it to you in words, it would be probably quicker to understand if you just tried it.”



With a smile, Filder recommended it to Vulcan.

Vulcan could not hide his face, which reflected his curiosity. He walked toward the crystal, put his palm on it and looked at Filder. Filder nodded, and Vulcan slowly sent in mana.

When he did, a window screen similar to the SYSTEM's notification screen appeared in front of Vulcan.

[You have connected to the Wiki Crystal.]

[Please select the number for the information you wish to view.]

**1. Golden Ranking**

**2. Rookie Ranking**

**3. Latest News**

**4. Information Inquiries**

## 5. Freeboard

## 6. Suggestions

“... What is this?”

“It is a mysterious crystal that allows you to see the public opinion of the Beloong City’s residents. For now, check out the second one.”

Before they realized, Filder was already gone somewhere to take food orders, so Jake answered instead.

Vulcan selected 2 as Jake asked. Immediately, the screen filled with names and information about the people in the rank 1 to 30.

1st place: Dokgo Hoo

- Master swordsman from Murim. Joined the ranks of Zenith immediately after completing the training under Filder. His talents impressed even Folken, the patrol team captain. Practically speaking, his abilities are so incredible that it makes one sorry for even having him in the Rookie Ranking.

2nd place: Vulcan

- A Player. Unlike most Players, which are hopelessly weak, he is estimated to be pretty strong. Confirmed to have single-handedly defeated Uruo. There was a report about him fighting two monsters at once in the south gate field.

3rd place: Hororo

- From Powel. Known to have high-level wind magic. The Holy Denomination of War is paying attention to him as a prodigy.

...

“If you click on the name, you can check out comments from other people.”

Upon hearing Jake’s words, Vulcan clicked on Dokgo Hoo’s name.

For some reason, Vulcan was more curious about Dokgo Hoo than himself.

[Comments about Mr. Dokgo Hoo’s Ranking]

Anonymous: I have never seen a rookie this powerful in a

hundred years. I guarantee it.

Anonymous: The way I see it, he is not the kind of talent that should stay in this place. He would either quickly move on to Act 2 or go back to his home world.

Anonymous: The runts above might be working for Dokgo Hoo. He is not that strong.

Re: Anonymous: You are just a newborn mutt. You are all talk because this is Wiki. Would you be able to say shit like that if you met him in person?

Re: Anonymous: Yeah. Next Second-Rate.

Vulcan carefully observed all corners of the window and noticed that the ranking must be done by votes from the residents.

Besides that, there were options for comments, such as writing, editing, deleting, and more. The user interface was streamlined and similar to the Internet from Earth.

It was a virtual space where people could check out other people's opinions in real time and express their own.

‘This is totally like Internet!’

It had been a really long time since Vulcan saw something nostalgic to Earth. His hands moved rapidly.

He read comments about Dokgo Hoo, then he read comments about himself, and then he went on to see the Gold Ranking to read information about the top tiers.

Vulcan's eyes, which were busy moving rapidly to read the information, suddenly came to a stop.

‘Lee JungYup is... at 7th place.’

The confrontation with Lee JungYup left Vulcan with a strong impression in his mind. The memory was still fresh.

Vulcan couldn't help but to be weary of him.

“Haha. As I thought, even you are like others when it comes to this. It looks like you can't stop looking at it.”

Jake laughed. It appeared he found it to be funny that Vulcan stopped the conversation and was now completely lost in the Wiki Crystal.

Vulcan was a little embarrassed. He terminated the connection and came back to the table. While eating food that came before long, Vulcan said,

“That thing over there is amazing. If I new something like that was here, I would have checked it out a long time ago.”

“Well, you were spending all of your time leveling up. I can see why you didn’t know about it. So, now you understand why you are in the ranking?”

“Yes. Honestly, even when I think about it, I am capable enough to have my name in the Rookie Ranking.”

“Yes. You certainly are. The guy named Hororo in the 3rd place is about as capable as Uruo, so you are way beyond that.”

Jake tilted up the beer glass.

He drank the whole thing at once and looked at Vulcan.

Vulcan was getting uncomfortable with Jake’s blank stare, so Vulcan was about to say something, but Jake said,

“It is a problem that you are way beyond that.”

“... What do you mean by that?”

Vulcan’s face hardened. Jake ordered additional beer and continued.

“As I said last time, you are getting stronger way too fast. You are going at it so fast that it is impossible for people to not notice you. You were able to go about your business as freely as you have so far because Dokgo Hoo enjoy standing out, but do you think you will still be able to from this point?”

“What you are saying is...”

“There are a lot of people who are curious about your abilities.”

Jake continued.

“In a way, it could be said that this is partly my fault. Because I am not the type to invest on just anyone, the rumor about you spread faster. The news about you crushing the Players Alliance and hunting freely at the south gate field.”

“Mr. Jake, what you are saying is, I could be in danger from now on?”

“That’s right. Of course, people are not going to ambush you out of blue while you are in middle of hunting. If they did without a just cause, they would be caught and sent away by the patrol. However... I wanted to tell you that there will be more of people coming to pester you through the official route.”

“What is the official route?”

“A duel.”

Vulcan relaxed his face and said,

“Haha. If it is just a duel, I can just refuse, can’t I? Also, if it is a duel, I don’t have to worry about people targeting my life either. Isn’t that right?”

“You are thinking way too positively.”

Jake took a big bite out of a chicken leg and continued like a teacher giving a student a lecture.

“I will give you an example that would be easy for you to understand. There will be people like Dokgo Hoo, no, fight maniacs who are even more stubborn than Dokgo Hoo will come to challenge you. Do you think they will just leave you alone because you refused?”

“Really, is Beloong City where only the people who are lacking in common sense gather?”

“Of course. You have no idea how many boneheads there are among the most powerful practitioners. Although there are ones with common sense too.”

Vulcan sighed big.

He figured that occasional duel would not hurt, but he was



concerned about the time that would be wasted in the process.

Vulcan didn't like the idea of his leveling up being affected negatively because of duels with these ruckus buckos. He wanted to say no to them.

Vulcan asked Jake.

"Really, you don't have any? A place where I can hide and hunt?"

"... Can't you believe a person's words? I really don't know anything other than what I have already told you."

"Ugh, then what should I do."

Vulcan looked depressed, but Jake thought Vulcan was acting weird. Jake said,

"You really are an weirdo. In a situation like this, usually, people worry about their safety. But you, you are more worried about losing time."

"You know me well. Yes, that is my only concern."

"You are not scared of a duel? You could get hurt if someone stronger than you challenged you. What if he doesn't hold back?"

“I am not afraid. Not even a little bit. Unless it is someone who is at the top end of 400 level, I can end the duel without any injuries.”

“... You have an incredible confidence. Haha.”

Vulcan's face was completely cringed all over the place. Meanwhile, Jake was thinking hard about something. As if he finally remembered, he snapped his finger.

“That's right. There is a way to minimize the pestering.”

“What is that?”

Vulcan straightened his face and looked at Jake, and Jake said with stern eyes,

“Go find a suitable practitioner to duel against you and show off to everyone what you are made of.”

“What?”

“Display your power to everyone so most of them wouldn't even dare to challenge you.”

## Chapter 29 - A Super Rookie (Part 2)

---

“Demonstrate my power?”

“That’s right. The top end of 400 level that you mentioned... that would be about Golden Ranking’s 20th place and above. If you are confident that you can beat anyone below that, don’t hold out on your strength. Just go out in the open and show off your power. It will be the shortcut to avoiding bothersome things.”

“Make it so nobody would even dare to think about challenging me...”

“That’s what I’m talking about.”

It was a pretty neat idea.

Certainly, instead of facing the mass number of First-Rate warriors one at a time, it looked like the better idea would be to just find a suitable Zenith-Rate warrior and showoff the overwhelming difference in strength.

“If I do, it will definitely reduce the number of people that would come to bother me, right?”

“Of course. Even these guys have some sense. They won’t go throw tantrums at someone who they can see an obvious difference in strength. They know that such behaviors will be frowned upon by the people. People will say that someone like that

is a bastard who doesn't know his place.”

“But what if I beat a very powerful warrior and then those that are even more powerful decide to challenge me?”

After hearing Vulcan's question, Jake looked like he was thinking that was a stupid question.

Not knowing the reason behind Jake's face, Vulcan waited for his response.

“Hey. You really don't take interest in Beloong City. The vibe I get from you just screams that you just want to leave this place soon. It feels really weird.”

“Am I supposed to be interested? Also, what does this have to do with not knowing much about the city?”

“Most of the people in the top 100 of the Golden Ranking are fossils.”

Vulcan thought about it for a while.

“... You mean, they were here for that long?”

“That's right. To them, this place is a second home world. Their rankings are status and also identity. Unless they are certain about the victory, they don't pick fights with someone who has a lower

rank than themselves.”

Vulcan was still not convinced.

The most powerful ones in the top 100 would have a minimum level of 450.

If they put just a little bit of effort, they could beat Act 1 and return to their home world or wish for something else, but they chose to settle here instead.

“Just what about Beloong City made them want to fixate so much on their status or reputation here? If they forgot about all that and just focused on training, I think they would have cleared Act 1 a long time ago...”

“Not exactly.”

Jake interrupted Vulcan.

“Reaching a new height is not something that can be done so easily like how you have been able to.”

Jake made a bitter face as he drank liquor. He continued,

“Also, people like you, who are talented and hard working, all left the city by clearing the Act. Or they are dead.”

“...Hm.”

The two just sat there for a moment in silence.

The one that broke the silence was Jake. As if he was trying to change the mood, he asked Vulcan in a cheerful voice.

“It looks like that’s about everything I should be telling you. Now, isn’t it about time to do something that’s the most important one?”

“Pardon? There is something else to do?”

“Wow... You are getting all that sponsorship from me. How could you forget?”

“Ah, the items!”

Because he was only thinking about the plans for what could happen, Vulcan completely forgot about the items he was going to give to Jake.

Vulcan promptly said,

“It slipped my mind. Please look at them from outside. You can have high expectations for these. I found many useful items.”

“I got it. Nowadays, Blacksmith Haywood had been breaking quite a few weapons, so there is a high demand for weapons.”

“To start with, he is... not a blacksmith. He is just doing it as a hobby.”

“Even so, if it wasn’t for him, half of the people from Murim would be fighting with bare hands. We should be thankful for the fact that he makes and repairs weapons.”

Jake stood up with a smile on his face. Vulcan also peeked a smile and went toward the Pub’s main entrance.

It was when he was just about to open the door.

BULKUK.

There was someone entering the Pub first, a man with a short blonde hair and a tattoo on his arm.

With a fierce angle on his eyes, his face was not the kind that gave off an affable impression.

‘He sure have a dirty look on his face.’

Vulcan stepped aside to avoid unnecessary confrontation.

However, the tattooed man didn't walk past Vulcan.

He was only glaring at Vulcan with eyes burning with fire.

Vulcan didn't avoid his glaring either. Vulcan said,

“Is there something you want to say?”

“You are the rookie that beat Uruo, right?”

“... Yes I am. What brings you here?”

“I finally found you. I thought you were at the merchants' district.”

The tattooed man peeked a smile. Teeth that felt sharp like that of sharks could be seen.

“I am requesting a duel with you.”

Vulcan stood there for a moment with a blank stare and then looked at Jake.

Jake was also looking at Vulcan.

Jake said,



“And they say even a tiger will show up when someone talks about it.”

\*\*\*

The time was a little early to call it an evening. The sun was just about to set, and the east gate field was crowded with people because of an unexpected event.

A spectator in a swordsman's getup said as he ate popcorn he bought from the pub,

“It looks like Horune is fighting a duel again. It has only been a while. Maybe he had an enlightenment?”

“It's not like that. It looks like he was just curious about a rookie's strength.”

A man in a mage's getup with a stylish mustache responded.

The swordsman cringed.

“That's... That guy, Horune, isn't he going too far? Are you saying he requested a duel to a rookie? Huh... If anything goes wrong, we will be cleaning a corpse today.”

The man stuffed himself with popcorn, and he continued to

express that this didn't make any sense.

“Horune is going too far, but this rookie is also a weirdo. Did people talk him into this because he got in the Rookie Ranking? Or does he not know about Horune's strength?”

Horune was one of Zenith-Rank warrior. It was said there are only about 500 people with that rank in Beloong City.

It was definitely not a level that a newbie in the Rookie Ranking should be taking so lightly.

“You. It seems like it has been a while since you connected to the Wiki Crystal.”

“Uh? Well, that's true. It was overflowing with strange comments, so I quit it for a while. Why do you ask?”

The mage with the mustache lifted his staff and pointed toward the rookie. A voice with a bit of excitement could be heard from his mouth.

“That dark haired man is currently at 2nd place in the Rookie Ranking. He defeated Uruo single-handedly too. Rumor has it that he is at the top end of First-Rate.”

“Huh. Really?”

The swordsman thought about when it had been about 10 years since he came to Asgard.

Back then, he was no good. He just got to Second-Rate, and his memories of that time were filled with instances of fighting against Orcs.

“I thought Dokgo Hoo was the only one, but here we have another.”

“I know. I think both of them will clear the Act 1 and leave this place soon.”

“In that case, I guess even the Order of Virtue or Holy Denomination of War wouldn't touch him either.”

“That's right. Instead of seeing blood from pestering him for no good reason, it is better to just let him go to the next stage.”

“By the way, do you know that rookie's name? I haven't heard much about the guy.”

The mage with the mustache said as he took some of the popcorn from the swordsman,

“I heard his name is Vulcan.”

Vulcan felt slightly nervous, but he was not feeling uncomfortable.

That's how he felt standing with his sword drawn in front of so many people.

In front of him, about 300 feet away, he could see Horune holding a long staff.

Using scan, which became his habit now, Vulcan checked the opponent's level.

[Zenith Mage Horune]

[411Lv]

‘I was so sure that he was going to be a brawler type.’

Vulcan mistook him for a moment because of his fierce expression and gigantic body. However, now that Vulcan saw Horune holding a staff, Vulcan was starting to think that he look like a mage as well.

“As I said earlier, we should not attempt to kill each other. Is that understood?”

“Yes. We should avoid unnecessary death. If one side gets injured to the point he cannot continue the duel, we will stop it. The winner should take the loser to the infirmary.”

‘He has better manner than I thought.’

Vulcan reflected on his past mistake for frowning upon Horune and thinking that he looked like a hideous and violent weapon that took on a human form.

Vulcan swung his sword a few times and said toward Horune,

“Well then, let’s get started. Thunder God’s Might.”

“All right. HUAP!”

## **BOOM BOOM BOOM**

Piercing through the ground around Vulcan, three large streams of water rose up. As Horune concentrated mana to his staff, the water streams grew in their size.

Situation was that Vulcan was surrounded by three large pillars made of water.

Vulcan used the Thunder God’s Might and quickly escaped the

formation.

Water missiles started to shoot out from the water pillars. The water missiles that missed started to punch holes on the ground along the path that Vulcan just passed by.

It felt like three heavy machine guns were endlessly firing bullets. Even though it was only a little bit, Vulcan felt pressured.

‘Multiple magic attacks pouring out from a real mage... It is on a whole another scale from Uruo!’

The power of individual missiles were similar to Uruo’s skill, but the firing rate and the cumulative number of shots being fired were beyond comparison.

Even so, this was still not enough to be a threat to Vulcan.

He could dodge a magic like this for 24 hours if he had to.

It appeared Horune realized this as well. He increased the amount of mana being focused into the staff.

Larger bulks that were substantially bigger than the water missiles so far were launched toward Vulcan’s surrounding areas.

Some of the bulks turned into Water Spirits and blocked Vulcan’s movement path. However, the bulk of water right above Vulcan

was staying the same.

Vulcan had a bad feeling about it. He transformed into the Fire Spirit and pierced through one of Water Spirits that was surrounding him. After a little bit of delay, the bulk of water that was floating above exploded.

Droplets of water were pouring down with enough power to pierce through even the thickest of iron plates.

**CHIIIIK**

**BOOM BOBOBOOM**

The scenery became full of mist because of the steam generated from collision of flames and water. Slicing through that scene was Vulcan. He appeared to be completely clean as if nothing even scratched him.

Horune's eyes turned violent.

‘This is a rookie? This is a Player? Don't make me laugh!’

To think that someone who dodged his attacks so easily was still a rookie, and on top of that, he was not from Powel or Murim, but just a Player, Horune really could not believe it.

However, at the same time, he was getting overrun with the thrill and excitement.

‘I don’t care if you are rookie or not!’

Horune increased his mana to the maximum and drew out two more stream of water from the ground.

At the heat of the moment, he shouted to Vulcan,

“I will crush you!”

‘What?’

Vulcan was looking surprised as he stared at Horune who shouted at him.

Actually, he figured that there was something a little off about Horune from the moment they first met.

‘Looks like he get excited easily.’

Vulcan thought about things as he dodged streams of water pouring down at him.

He imagined that people specializing in water element magic would have peaceful personality, but it appeared that was not the



case.

‘Well, that’s that. I need to think of a method that will make an impact.’

Even though Vulcan was making the spectators dizzy with his hectic movements, he still had moments to spare to think about things.

Vulcan was only dodging the attacks without fighting back for a reason.

It was to think of a good way to make a strong impression so that the most would not think about picking a fight with him.

To Vulcan, this was the more peculiar problem than beating Horune.

‘Get close to him at a blink of an eye and use Thunder God’s Strike? No. That could kill the opponent. Should I end it by pouring Hellfires from a distance? That’s too ordinary. Maybe I should wait a little longer. It looks like something is about to happen...’

It had been a while since Vulcan started dodging water magic attacks. He looked at the ground and realized that the ground, which was dry soil until a moment ago, had turned into mud with water everywhere. He could even see large spots of water here and there.

Vulcan noted that the relentless array of magic attacks came to a stop. He used a flame magic to evaporate water in his surrounding area.

In the field that was swept away by a flood, only the ground Vulcan was standing was dry as if it was drought at that one spot.

From the duel, Vulcan was entering a state of slight excitement. Vulcan asked Horune,

“Why did you stop the magic attacks?”

Vulcan was not actually expecting a reply, but Horune politely responded,

“I noticed that at this rate, I would only be beating on your shadows. I don’t want to waste mana.”

“Is that so? If you don’t even do that mana wasting act, you will get hurt.”

“No. The one that will get hurt is you. The conditions were already set.”

Vulcan felt the ground was shaking due to a powerful magic. It was covering a large area. Vulcan became alert to the surroundings and prepared for the magic that could pour out at any moment.

To Vulcan who was in middle of it all, Horune said with a confident voice,

“It is pointless to prepare now. KUUUAAAP! Water God’s Fury!”

**KWHAAAAAAA**

A Zenith-Rate mage cast magic with all of his might. He even shouted the spell. The spell unfolded its might in the field.

The ground was completely wet from several thousands of water magic, and there were five of large water streams. The moisture from all of these came together with Horune’s magic power to create a tidal wave.

The tidal wave was coming from the outer rim of a circle surrounding Vulcan, and the wave was headed toward the center where Vulcan stood. The tidal wave was of an immense scale.

An incredibly destructive power could be felt from the wave, enough to sweep everything off its path.

\*\*\*

“Looks like it is over.”

“It seems so. He fought well, but as I thought, he can’t beat Horune.”

The swordsman was done with the popcorn, and he was already drinking beer instead. He exchanged words with the mage with the mustache.

Nearby, there were several tens of people that were also watching the duel, and they were all having similar thoughts. Watching Horune’s certain kill move, which would be decorating the final act of the duel, some were excited, and some feared for Vulcan’s safety.

There wasn’t anyone that was thinking that Vulcan would win.

However,

‘Looks like I will be able to make a great impact.’

At least Vulcan was not doubting his victory.

Actually, beyond that, Vulcan was thinking about putting up a flashy spectacle.

# Chapter 30 - A Super Rookie (Part 3)

---

Dominating the opponent.

This meant completely immobilizing and crushing the opponent using superior powers or skills.

To stay true to its meaning, Vulcan had to think of something that would literally stomp and crush the opponent to the point he will not even think about fighting back. Vulcan wondered about what would be needed to demonstrate such a significant difference in abilities.

As a first condition, Vulcan figured that it was necessary to bring out the full strength of the opponent.

‘I must not let him have any afterthoughts.’

If the duel ended with the opponent thinking, ‘If I used the full strength earlier, I could have won,’ or ‘Only if I had the opportunity to use the certain-kill move...’, Vulcan would have been better off not having fought the duel at all because now the defeated opponent will challenge Vulcan again and again until there were no more afterthoughts.

Because of this reason, Vulcan chose to wait.

To bring about Horune’s full strength, Vulcan demonstrated his dodging skill, which was his greatest ability.

It was to show everyone that he is absolutely invulnerable to ordinary or half-baked attacks. It was also to give the opponent the time to prepare his most desired ultimate attack.

In the end, Vulcan's prediction was dead-on.

Horune used the most powerful magic that he could cast. Gigantic tidal waves towering above the sky was approaching rapidly in order to obliterate Vulcan's body.

‘Now, for the second condition!’

Now that Vulcan brought out the opponent's full strength, he had to crush that strength and make it certain for everyone to realize it.

Attacking the weakness in the technique or the opponent's mind was no good. That would have only resulted in the opponent having afterthoughts, and when he figure out a way to compensate for the weakness, he would certainly come back running, possibly even tomorrow.

That's how the battle maniacs in Asgard were.

Because of this, what Vulcan needed was something that was simple yet would most certainly reveal one's strength.

Pure strength.

In Vulcan's case, pure and incredible magic!

‘Of course, when it comes to the mana capacity, there probably won't be a big difference...’

Horune's level is 411.

Vulcan's is 302.

Compared to others with the same level, Vulcan had superior mana capacity, and he even had great equipments from Jake. However, Vulcan speculated that he couldn't have more mana than Horune, who had a level that was higher than him by over 100.

Still, a battle of magic was not fought by the capacity alone.

Factors such as how much of the full capacity could be utilized at once, and how much mana could be spent in a certain period of time, were important.

Also, through the SYSTEM, Vulcan could launch magic attacks voicelessly and indefinitely without any mental strain or focus as much as his mana capacity allowed. To Vulcan, there was no other strategy that was more advantageous than this.

‘Wasting mana is not my style, but...’

Vulcan cast Super Heated Inferno, his strongest magic, which he had not used in a long time.

**WHAAARURURURUK**

Fierce flame flowed from underneath Vulcan’s feet.

Still, it was a little lacking.

It was certainly a great magic, but in comparison to the Water God’s Wraith that Horune cast, it had shortcomings. It almost looked pathetic.

However, that was not the end of Vulcan’s magic.

‘Shall I get started.’

Vulcan the Player’s SYSTEM was fully activated.

Above the surface covered by the Super Heated Inferno, countless number of flame magic started to overlap.

‘What’s this?’



Horune, who was controlling the Water God's Wraith, had a changed look in his eyes.

It was because he felt a huge mana from Vulcan who was standing in the center of the approaching tidal waves.

Horune was wondering if Vulcan would give up resisting, but now he formed a smile on his lips.

‘There is no way someone without grits would hold the second place in the Rookie Ranking.’

Horune didn't know much about Vulcan, but he figured that Vulcan must have reached where he was through excruciating trainings that Horune himself had gone through.

Out of concern for the possibility of unintentionally taking the opponent's life, Horune had been holding back so far, but now he chose to erase the thought.

Now Horune believed that, even if Horune fought with all of his might, Vulcan must possess the ability to survive at least.

Horune focused his mind and poured in even more mana into the Water God's Wraith.

It was then.

# KWAAAAANG

A gigantic circular wave of flame rose up around Vulcan.

Its intensity gradually increased. The way it looked, how flame was burning high all the way to the sky, looked incredibly impressive.

It looked as if a giant pillar of flame was established to connect the ground to the sky. It was an awe striking sight to behold.

Horune's smile thickened.

'The Fire Wall? No. It is bigger than that. He cast the Fire Field to its maximum power.'

A lot of people think it is water that neutralizes fire, but in reality, the two elements were on equal standing.

Just like how a large amount of water could put out a fire, an intense flame could also evaporate water.

Horune knew exactly what Vulcan's plan was.

Against multiple large-scale water element magic, Vulcan was intending to fight head-on by casting fire element magic.

Using his own flame, Vulcan was trying to triumph over Horune's Water God's Wraith.

'A battle of magic power... Ha! He is more arrogant than I thought!'

"Your challenge, I shall accept it!"

Excited, Horune could feel the blood rushing through his entire body. The exhilarating sensation felt like it could fry his head, and it enabled Horune to bring about more power beyond his normal output.

Having utilized 120% of magic power that he could use at once, Horune started to bleed from his nose. It was because he overworked his brain in order to apply large amount of mana beyond his normal capability.

However, it was worth it. The Water God's Wraith became even bigger, and with an even more fierce intensity, it rushed toward Vulcan.

"Huhuhuhu."

Horune from before the duel, the man who promised to avoid taking each other's lives, could no longer be found.

In his stead, there was just a lunatic mage who was in way too deep in the thrill of the battle against a young and promising mage

swordsman.

‘Now, what’s your move? Super rookie!’

Watching the tidal wave and the pillar of flames about to collide, Horune laughed violently.

\*\*\*

“That, that! That lunatic!”

“He is totally trying to kill him?”

The swordsman and the mage with the mustache coughed out voices of disappointment.

They couldn’t help but to feel that it was a shame. They couldn’t hide their disappointments over this, that a super rookie with a bright future up ahead of him will be losing his life over some pointless duel.

‘He looked like a promising young man that could certainly go past the Act 1 if he trained diligently...’

The way Vulcan moved was not the kind by a rookie who had been in Asgard for only a few years.

Horune was a Zenith-Rank mage. His water magic was famous for being difficult to dodge because of its incredible speed and firing rate.

The fact that Vulcan managed to dodge them all without a single hit meant he had amazing talent.

‘It is such a shame.’

He wasn’t sure exactly since when, but the mage with the mustache started to think of beating Act 1 as something of a very distant future.

He had been getting vicarious satisfaction from when super rookies, also known as ‘graduates in training,’ defeated Sarantis. Watching Horune fighting with all of his might against a rookie out of his misguided excitement, the mage with the mustache thought Horune was being petty.

‘That little runt. I knew he was going to cause an accident someday. If he kills a guy in middle of a duel in an obvious way like that in the open, he won’t even be able to make excuses to the patrol... Huh?’

The mage with a mustache turned his gaze toward a blaze that was formed with Vulcan in the center.

At first, the flame looked like nothing but just a candle in front of a whirlwind. No. It was the same as just a candle below a bucket of

water being poured down. However, then he noticed that the Fire Field was gradually increasing its intensity.

It appeared that Vulcan was continuously casting more magic to overlap more on to the Fire Field.

However, its speed was abnormal.

The Fire Field's blaze was intensifying at a rate that could not be imitated by First-Rate or even Zenith-Rate mages.

'10... 15... 20... 30...!'

The mage with the mustache gave up on distinguishing the number of Fire Field magic being overlapped.

At the same time, he also stopped thinking about it. A murmur could be heard from his mouth,

"Huuu..."

Fire Field was a high-level magic that even a grand mage from a lower dimension could not dare to cast more than three at once.

Anyone that could cast even one Fire Field would probably be showered with respect and envy from many mages.

What would they think if they saw a super rookie casting over 30 of a high-level magic like that in less than a second?

The spectators could only watch with blank faces as the Water God's Wraith and Vulcan's flame magic collided in mid-air.

KUAAAAAAAAA.

CHIIIIIC.

Incredible amount of steam was generated from the tidal wave colliding with the giant pillar of flame.

A scene straight from an old legend about wars of ancient Gods was being recreated in Asgard's east gate field.

All of the people watching the battle were the strongest from their own dimensions, but they could not feel confident about themselves in light of the scene brought about by Horune and Vulcan's battle. They could not dare to.

They couldn't predict the outcome of the battle either.

The people gathered here to watch the duel ranged from First-Rate to Second-Rate.

They were all a little lacking in experiences to predict who would be the victor.

In one side, there was a powerful mage with a Zenith-Rate title, which was said to be held by about 500 people in Asgard.

On the other side, there was a monster rookie that, surprisingly, was fighting head-on against the certain-kill move of that Zenith-Rate mage.

To the spectators, the two were like a sky above the sky. The spectators could not dare to even form an opinion.

They could only hold their breath and watch.

“ ... ”

It had been about a minute since the collision of seemingly endless barrage of tidal wave and the pillar of flame standing with relentless might in the center of the tidal wave. The thick mist formed by the collision of the two magic gradually faded away. It was just about when things could be seen inside the battle again.

The people that were watching the duel all turned their eyes toward one place. Without being able to hide their surprise, they all opened their eyes wide and watched the scene.

There was a pillar of flame.

Despite the tidal wave that looked like a natural disaster sent by a



God, the pillar of flame stood still, not diminished. It looked strong and triumphant.

“Ah...!”

It was only a possibility, but now that it became a reality, people were speechless.

They each dropped their snacks and beer, but people didn't even realize it. They were all in a state of shock.

In this place, where the strongest of the past dimensions gather, Horune was one of the strongest at the top 2%.

There was nothing to fault about Horune the mage being given the title of Zenith-Rate.

It was unfathomable for a newbie mage swordsman, who had not even been in Asgard for ten years, to defeat Horune.

‘On top of that... It was not by a trick or ambush tactic. It was by a head-on battle of magic!’

“Looks like this is a birth of another super comet.”

The swordsman said as he picked up the beer bottle that he dropped to the ground. He took a sip from what was left of the bottle, cringed and tossed the bottle. Because of the heat, the beer

got warm and it did not taste good.

Even without that issue, he already lost the appetite for beer. He was feeling a bitter taste.

‘I wonder if people in the lower dimensions felt like this when they saw me. There were geniuses that made others’ life work achievements look trivial in comparison. Even among all of those geniuses, I showed the greatest talent, so I came this far, yet... Even among the geniuses... is there one who is vastly different in caliber?’

The swordsman looked at the mage with the mustache who was standing next to him.

The swordsman could not observe any confidence in the man.

In light of incredible brightness from the super rookie, the super comet, the swordsman felt like he was watching knight apprentices who envied him in his past.

The swordsman turned around without saying any words. There was no strength in his steps toward the pub.

‘I think I will be drinking a lot today.’

In light of a sense of hopelessness that he hadn’t felt in a long time, the swordsman’s shoulders sunk a little.

\*\*\*

The pillar of flame, which perfectly neutralized the Water God's Wraith, sustained it self for a while longer.

It was a kind of a showmanship by Vulcan to show it off to the spectators.

It was a necessary step since the goal was to let his power to be known.

Vulcan checked his remaining mana. Quite a bit of it was spent at the moment.

He used the SYSTEM and consumed a mana potion without anyone noticing.

He felt the mana gradually filling back up. Vulcan disengaged the magic.

In a slow pace, Vulcan walked to the front of Horune.

He didn't seem to be in a good condition.

It wasn't that he spent all of his mana, but it appeared that he paid a high price for controlling a huge amount of mana at once.

However, the expression on his face was in a good spirit. It was enough to eliminate Vulcan's worries about potential arguments on the outcome of the duel.

"... Looks like the outcome has been decided."

"Right. KULUK. KULUK."

There was blood mixed in Horune's coughs. Horune stabilized himself by supporting his faltering body with his staff. Horune looked at Vulcan and said,

"I have something I'm curious about."

"It seems everyone who fought me want to ask questions."

"KUUK. If they were mages, anyone would feel compelled to ask."

Horune coughed for a while, and then, with a serious face, he asked Vulcan,

"What method did you use to operate mana? If you poured in that much mana... there is no way that your body's condition would be all right. Instead of the fact that I lost, I am more surprised by the fact that you walked all the way here looking completely fine after having spent and sustained such amount of

magic power.”

“...”

“I am not asking for the core details of the operation method. Just an explanation to satisfy my curiosity... That would be enough.”

Vulcan firmly closed his mouth.

It was because he had nothing to say.

‘If I told him I used the SYSTEM and fired the magic without any concern for physical or mental strains, would he understand that?’

It didn’t appear to be the case.

Still, to just ignore him and not say anything in response, Horune seemed to be quite fixated on the subject.

“Is it a detail that’s difficult for you to say?”

“Hm...”

Vulcan agonized over the issue for a moment, and he decided to just say whatever that came to his mind.

“... I just did it.”

“... What?”

The serious look on Horune’s face was ruined a little.

Vulcan felt uncomfortable and too sorry to look at his face like that, so Vulcan stared at the sky instead and continued,

“As I trained, naturally, I was able to do it.”

“ ... ”

In silence, Horune looked at Vulcan for a while, and he plumped down.

He looked like a puppet that just lost its soul. It made Vulcan feel uneasy.

With one of his arms, Horune supported his upper body and looked at the sky. He murmured quietly,

“... A real prodigy was right here all this time.”

Vulcan smiled awkwardly.

# Chapter 31 - Troublemakers

---

The man had a red face. He appeared to be pretty drunk.

A man in Murim style clothing placed his hand on the Wiki Crystal to get connected.

[Please select the number for the information you wish to view.]

- 1. Golden Ranking
- 2. Rookie Ranking
- 3. Latest News
- 4. Information Inquiries
- 5. Freeboard
- 6. Suggestions

---

The screen changed after a moment. The Rookie Ranking was displayed, showing 1st to 30th place in the list. In the list, from the bottom, the man searched to confirm his place.

[9th place: Sun Wu-min]

- From Murim. Master of physical techniques. Known to be at the top end of the Second-Rate. With his natural-born, monstrous muscular strength, also known to have taken down Orc warriors in a single blow each.

“All right! I got listed in the ranking!”

Sun Wu-min shouted out in excitement.

He must have been so excited. He didn't care about other people's stares. Instead, he made a tight fist and raised it to the air.

Having defeated Beck Yerl, the left handed swordsman, in a duel yesterday, Sun Wu-min was hoping that he would be in the ranking, but to see that he really was in the ranking now, Sun Wu-min felt like he could fly away. His entire body felt like it was burning.

‘It was a pretty difficult duel... but, in the end, the victor was me!’



In his former dimension, Sun Wu-min was called the 'Fearsome and Deadly One Punch.' He single-handedly defeated five martial art schools.

He felt like he was undefeated under the sky. However, after arriving at Asgard, he was really surprised to see so many powerful warriors.

The shock was enough to make the confidence and pride that he built throughout his life to collapse at an instant, and it set Sun Wu-min to drown in the sea of suffering.

However, Sun Wu-min was not the kind to breakdown like this.

When there were countless rookies losing their lives from dangerous training against monsters or giving up and becoming half useless, he didn't falter. He survived.

And finally, after 8 years of hardship, he entered the Rookie Ranking.

'It will take longer than it had in the past dimension... But there will be a day when even Beloong City will be kneeling in front of my feet! Just wait!'

Sun Wu-min tilted his chin up proudly.

He flexed the muscles on his shoulders so tightly that it looked like the shoulders were about to break. As he turned like that, he briefly saw the eyes of a black haired young man.

Sun Wu-min was overflowing with more confidence than ever since the day he arrived at Asgard.

Of course, when he was feeling like that, there was no way he would take kindly to a young man staring back at him with a stiff expression.

“Hey! What...”

He was about to yell at the young man for staring, but after he carefully observed the young man’s face, he quickly swallowed the words.

His shoulders, which was open wide, now shrunk. Sun Wu-min avoided the face by turning his head to the side, and he quietly returned to the table he was sitting.

“What was that?”

Vulcan gave an odd stare at Sun Wu-min who cowered in front of him, but soon, he stopped minding the man and stepped in front of the Wiki Crystal.

Vulcan used the Wiki Crystal like someone who had been in the city for many tens of years, and he clicked the Rookie Ranking’s 1st

place.

[1st place: Vulcan]

- A Player. His true ability, which only had numerous rumors about, was revealed two days ago. He demonstrated incredible magic power operation capability that defeated Zenith-Rate mage Horune on a head-on duel. Estimated to have certainly went past the entry level of Zenith-Rate.

[Comments about Mr. Vulcan's Ranking]

Anonymous: I have never seen a rookie this powerful in a hundred years. I guarantee it.

Re: Anonymous: There was a comment similar to this in Dokgo Hoo's section...

Anonymous: Did he do something conniving or underhanded? How could a guy, who had been here for less than 5 years, beat Horune?

Anonymous: There are people like him. Those that make a prodigy look like an idiot.

Anonymous: Looks like a super comet that will defeat Sarantis within 10 years was born.

Re: Anonymous: We can't know that for certain. As you get to a new height, the wall that you have to overcome gets taller too...

Anonymous: What's all this gossip about?

‘Looks like that’s the end of all the comments.’

“You are really into having fun looking at Wiki.”

Vulcan turned his head to look behind him.

He could see Jake carrying a bottle of liquor as always.

Vulcan disconnected the Wiki Crystal and complained,

“How could you say that? I only had been using it for yesterday and today. Just two days.”

“Haha. I’m saying that because you seemed really focused in it.”

The two found a suitable empty table and sat down.

Without turning his head, Vulcan looked around with just his eyes.

He could feel that many of the people in the pub were staring at him.

“Is this a déjà vu?”

“What about it is déjà vu?”

“It feels like this happened before.”

“Hm... You must be talking about when you beat Uruo.”

“Ah, that’s right.”

Certainly, back then, Vulcan felt that there were some people being aware of him.

However, this time, there were more.

Vulcan felt over two-thirds of the people in the pub were focusing their attention to him.

“Why? Is it making you uncomfortable?”

“It is uncomfortable. It is not like I’m starving for attention.”

“Whether they are martial artists or mages, there are many people out there who are obsessed with fame, but you are not like them.”

“In the basis, I am not a martial artist or mage. I’m just a young man from another world.”

“Say things like that and you will get serious beatings from all martial artists and mages gathered here.”

Jake made a face like a prankster. Vulcan didn’t want to continue having a long conversation with this topic, so he changed the subject.

“Well, anyway, as you said, Mr. Jake, I think I successfully overwhelmed people. There was definitely nobody challenging me yesterday.”

“Huhu. It was because what you demonstrated was so incredible... I know you well, yet even I was surprised. Can you imagine how others must have felt?”

It was as Jake said.

After just one day, the story about the duel between Horune and Vulcan was told to everyone in Beloong City.

Those that have not seen the duel themselves criticized the witnesses of the duel, saying it is ridiculous. However, because

Horune personally acknowledged his defeat, the gazes doubting Vulcan mostly disappeared.

There were a few that criticized even though they didn't see the duel. They said Vulcan must have used a trick or caught Horune off guard to achieve victory, but there were more people with opinions saying that even such tactics will require solid foundation in essential skills and abilities.

In conclusion, 97.5% of the residents in Beloong City, the people who were below the Zenith-Rate, couldn't dare to challenge Vulcan for a duel. They only watched his daily routines.

“Now, if I found a hidden hunting ground, that would be perfect.”

“Stop saying that. I really don't know anything else. Also, it's not like there is a shortage of monsters on the north gate field. Forget this foolish hope about a hidden hunting ground.”

“Hm...”

Actually, Jake was right.

Vulcan was now at starting point of level 300. Looking for a different hunting ground instead of one that already had plenty of 400 level monsters was just being excessively greedy.

“I always feel this way, but you are in too much of hurry when

you are just a rookie who hadn't even been in Asgard for 4 years. There are many others who had been standing still even though they were challenging themselves for 200 to 300 years. There were also quite a few who lost their lives while attempting to reach a new height despite the danger in their training methods."

"... Certainly, I am rushing it. You are right about that."

Jake's glass was about half full. He drank it all at once, looked at Vulcan, and continued,

"Don't rush too much. Just move forward slowly and diligently. At that pace, it won't take very long. You should be able to definitely clear it."

"... Thank you for your advice."

Vulcan followed Jake and drank the rest of his drink.

Like that, another day in Asgard flew by.

\*\*\*

"This... What happened?"

With a raised voice, Vulcan's gaze was aimed at Jake. Jake couldn't face Vulcan, so he smoked a cigarette instead.



“Didn’t you say that I will be able to avoid bothersome things if I demonstrated my power?”

“HumHum. I meant you ‘might’ be able to.”

“Huh...”

Looking at Vulcan, who couldn’t continue his words, Jake said as if he was trying to make an excuse.

“Also, if you held back and fought the duel haphazardly, you would be suffering from having had to deal with a lot more people challenging you for duels right about now. Thanks to you showing off your overwhelming strength, aren’t people below Zenith-Rate not even able to come near you?”

“That is true... Ha.”

Jake’s initial prediction was true only for first three days.

One time, when Vulcan came back from having a great time training, there was a man from Murim carrying five swords that came to ask for a duel. At first, Vulcan thought it was not a big deal.

However, the next day, a giant that appeared to be over seven feet tall came to request a duel. The day after that, when Horune came again requesting Vulcan for teachings, Vulcan could not help but to have resentment toward Jake.

“You said the Zenith-Rate warriors would avoid duels in the first place because they care too much about their reputation.”

“Most of them are like that... Those that were trapped in Beloong City the longest absolutely obsess over the ranking.”

“In that case, who are these people?”

“Hu... Even in Beloong City, they are the three most extreme ones. Not just you, but I bet they had been dueling against Dokgo Hoo until their heads burst.”

Most of the Zenith-Rate warriors in Beloong City were those who grew tired of training.

Most of those with talent above these warriors cleared Act 1 and went to the beyond or lost their lives from dangerous trainings.

It was obvious that the ones that left were those who had been wasting their time away because of a gigantic wall blocking their path. They were the people who became Beloong city's chained souls.

Looking at it from this perspective, the people who were least enthusiastic about living were not the Third-Rate Players, but perhaps the Zenith-Rate warriors.

However, even among those warriors, there were three who continued on their harsh training for several hundred years with their passion still burning strongly.

The man obsessed in magic, Horune.

The man obsessed in martial art techniques, Seo-Whee.

Just a lunatic, Ultoru.

At least these three did not turn to despair in light of a gigantic wall, which was the Ultra-Zenith-Rate, requiring level 500. They had been relentlessly pouring in all effort that they could muster.

In middle of this, new stimulants named Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo fell from the sky. The three madmen were not the type to just sit and watch from the side.

“These three... When it comes to these guys, there is nothing you can do. Even if you fought your duel haphazardly or made excuses and refused the duel, these men would have insisted on having a duel with you.”

“...Hm.”

“Instead, like Dokgo Hoo, just have fun. If that won’t work for you, how about setting a specific time and hanging out with them only at during that time?”

“I already agreed to do that... However, Ultoru? About that man, I don’t know what he would do. Honestly, I am feeling uneasy about this.”

Vulcan complained. He looked at Jake and continued,

“At least the other two men have some basic sense, but this other man... He is really weird. Don’t you think? Also, he kept repeating the same words over and over like someone who is a little retarded.”

“You are right. He does have retardation.”

“...Uh?”

“He is retarded. That man is an idiot.”

Jake looked at Vulcan who was giving him a blank stare. Jake continued,

“Why? An idiot can’t be a powerful warrior?”

“Um... That’s not it. I was thinking that, in order for someone to reach new heights, he has to be pretty smart too.”

“You are not very smart either. Isn’t that right?”

“... That’s...”

“I was kidding. That man is a master of physical attacks. By his incredible physical talent and diligent hard work, he got to the Zenith-Rate.”

Jake smiled lightly when he noticed that Vulcan was about to cringe his face. Jake continued,

“Also, other than that man, there are plenty of weirdoes all over the place, so get rid of your prejudice about idiots, birdbrains or stoneheads being low levels.”

“If that’s the case, this means there are more weirdoes out there besides these three? Instead of telling me about them later, just tell me right now. That way, I can at least prepare my mind for it.”

“... There is one more guy who is definitely an weirdo.”

Vulcan opened his eyes wide as if he was trying to convey that he wanted Jake to just spell it out already.

Jake fell into a deep thought for a while, and he came right next to Vulcan to whisper in his ears.

“There is a guy named Ho-Gwang. The son of the leader of the Order of Virtue.”

Vulcan was creeped-out by Jake suddenly coming close to whisper.

“Just what about him made you have to explain so cautiously?”

“You rascal! Watch what you are saying. I might say wrong things, so I will continue this at some other quieter place at another time.”

“You only made my head more complicated. Let’s just get out of here.”

After finishing what he said, Vulcan drank all of the cold beer that just came. He even burped loudly to his heart’s content, but it didn’t solve the frustration in his chest.

This was supposed to be a break time for Vulcan after several tens of hours spent on battle. He was thinking why he had to agonize over things even during his break.

Vulcan could not stop sighing. Watching him like that, Jake tried to console him.

“Take it easy. If you reduced the time spent chatting like this at the pub a little bit, won’t that be enough to make time for duels?”

“Is dueling the same as resting at a pub? Ha... Of course, I am not

blaming you for this.”

“THAT’S RIGHT. A MAN SHOULDN’T PUT BLAMES ON THE WRONG PEOPLE!”

In light of a really loud voice, Vulcan’s head tilted up.

He could see someone with an appearance that was very familiar to Vulcan.

Vulcan felt it was a little nice to see him again, but at the same time, it was making Vulcan sigh for some reason.

“Ugh.”

Vulcan shook his head left and right.

A giant with broad shoulders.

A man insisting on wearing a tiger striped pattern clothing for over three years. He was a true bandit from the mountains.

Carrying a gigantic buster-sword on his back, Dokgo Hoo said hello to Vulcan in a loud voice,

“HAHA! HAVE YOU BEEN DOING WELL! LITTLE BROTHER!”

## Chapter 32 - Troublemakers (Part 2)

---

“I have been well. How about you? Mr. Dokgo Hoo? Lately, I only had been hearing rumors about you. I haven’t seen you in a long time.”

“Hey! Mr. Dokgo Hoo? Call me big brother!”

It was hard for Vulcan to utter those words, but because he didn’t want to have an argument with Dokgo Hoo over it, Vulcan chose to call him 'Big Brother' as he wished.

“Yes, big brother. Were you cooped up somewhere and training? I heard nobody saw you for a month.”

“Yes. I had a small enlightenment, so I was cooped up in the mountains for a while.”

“Ah, on the south side, that place...”

For a reason unknown to Vulcan, those from Murim especially liked training in the mountains. It was more likely that there were more of them cooped up in mountains meditating instead of training by fighting against monsters.

“So, was there good resu... Looks like there was a good result from it.”



“You sure have quick eyes when it comes to noticing things.”

“It’s the ability of my SYSTEM.”

“That’s that!”

[Zenith-Rate Swordsman Dokgo Hoo]

[471Lv]

‘How does he level up so easily like that?’

When Vulcan was hearing explanations from Jake about reaching new heights, it sounded incredibly difficult, yet whenever Vulcan looked at how Dokgo Hoo was doing, it looked like the easiest thing in the world.

‘Of all people, I shouldn’t be saying this.’

Of course, since Vulcan was also getting stronger at a substantially faster rate than others, he figured he shouldn’t be the one to say such things.

Vulcan ended his useless thoughts and said to Dokgo Hoo,

“Big brother, this is Mr. Jake. Mr. Jake, this is Dokgo Hoo, the one I trained with under Mr. Filder.”

“Haha. I already know. Nowadays, you and Mr. Dokgo Hoo are the most famous ones. There is no way I wouldn’t know him. Also, I sold him a weapon a month ago.”

“Haha. The blade I bought from you, I have been using it well. It works really well, so I like it!”

Dokgo Hoo casually joined the table. He said as he ate snacks,

“So, what have you guys been talking about? At a glance, it sounded like you guys were talking about duels or whatnot?”

Vulcan’s face was obviously saying he does not want to, but he explained it all to Dokgo Hoo. Vulcan wasn’t liking it because he thought Dokgo Hoo, someone that usually enjoys duels, would give an opinion that was opposite of his own.

As expected, after hearing everything Vulcan had to say, Dokgo Hoo quickly yelled at Vulcan,

“What! Why are you talking about dueling as if it is a useless exercise? Don’t you know that dueling against a superb opponent is critical for reaching new heights?”

“... That is true in general, but, for me, it is not really necessary at this point. I just need to get to level 500 and defeat Sarantis...”

“That’s not true. Hunting to level up is for the purpose of getting stronger, right? A duel has an advantage of its own. Even for me, if it wasn’t for duels against top-notch warriors, I wouldn’t have gotten the last enlightenment.”

Dokgo Hoo continued as he fingered his chin,

“That’s right! Little brother, when is the scheduled time for the duel?”

“8 PM in the evening, five days from now. Why?”

“I’ll join you during the duel.”

“... From the start of this conversation, I figured things might turn out like this.”

Vulcan held his forehead with his hand. Dokgo Hoo looked excited like a kid who was about to go to an amusement park.

“The people who will be coming for the duel, they are Horune, Seo-Whee, and Ultoru, right? I know all of these guys. Maybe it’s time for me to have some fun swinging around my sword!”

“Do whatever you want.”

Vulcan said as he drank foamed up beer.

\*\*\*

A man with a sturdy body, as if it was shaped from metal, ran toward Vulcan with a violent intensity.

BOOM BOOM BOOM.

Vulcan avoided his attacks with light movements.

The man tracking Vulcan had very rough movements, but they were fearsome.

A large crater was formed as if a bomb exploded every time he stomped on the ground to rapidly change his trajectory. Although he was constantly doing movements that would seriously strain his body, his fighting spirit was not showing any sign of backing down.

In order to stomp on the man's momentum, Vulcan launched multiple shots of Hellfires. With speed and power far superior to when Vulcan was just level 99, the Hellfires flew toward man and bombarded him continuously.

**BOOM BOOM BABOOM**

Even after taking heavy hits from Vulcan's magic attacks, the man didn't know to stop.

He crossed his arms in front of him and blocked Vulcan's attacks with his body. Like a bulldozer, the man marched forward with a heavy momentum.

To the ground and to the sky, the flames that collided with his body bounced off. Some of the Hellfire shots hit the ground or trees in the surrounding area, and the impacts resulted in dust clouds foaming up.

Thick dust clouds blocked the man's vision, but the dust clouds couldn't prevent him from sensing someone standing nearby. He quickly ran toward the direction where he felt a presence, where he predicted Vulcan was standing.

It appeared that his prediction was correct. He could see a shadowy figure of someone through the dust clouds.

Until now, the man had eyes like an innocent country boy, but now they were bent into crescent shapes. With a face completely different from a moment ago, now with a face that resembled that of a devil, the man's right hand was opened wide.

With his right arm, the man grabbed the shadowy figure by the neck, and like a tiger extinguishing the life out of a deer by viciously biting through its neck, he threw down the figure into the ground.

**PERSESEEK**

“Huh? It’s just a skeleton?”

The man was confused after crushing a skeleton instead of person.

However, before he realized, there was already a blade pointing at the back of his neck.

“It’s over.”

“Huh? I lost again?”

The man of muscles, Ultoru, said like an idiot.

Vulcan put away his blade with a clean movement and turned around, but Ultoru’s voice could be heard,

“One more time! Let’s try it one more time!”

“I already did twice for you!”

“But... but... If I tried just one more time, I think I will be able to win this time...”

“No way. Instead of me, go over there. Fight Mr. Seo-Whee, Mr. Horune or big brother Dokgo Hoo.”

“But I already dueled with Seo-Whee and Horune a whole bunch of times...”

“In that case, why not fight big brother Dokgo Hoo?”

“Because, with him... it hurts too much when I get hit...”

Vulcan had a look on his face that said he couldn't believe what he was hearing. Vulcan looked at Dokgo Hoo and said,

“With a sparring partner who is obviously weaker than you, you should have held back enough. While I wasn't around, just how many people have you been beating up?”

“Kuhaha. Getting stronger faster by taking on beatings is how it is actually suppose to work!”

With a big laughter, Dokgo Hoo deflected the subject and said to Vulcan,

“What do you think? Duels are pretty helpful, right?”

“... I am not sure.”

Vulcan looked unsatisfied.

Certainly, duels were helping.

Dueling against Zenith-Rate warriors, the people that could be called the true powerhouses, was a very different experience.

Vulcan took turns fighting a master of magic, a swordsman specializing in high precision blade techniques, and a lightning bruiser who focused only on physical strength. In comparison to fighting several hundred of simpleton monsters, there was a lot to gain from the duels when it came to combat senses.

However, if someone was to ask if this was more efficient to the point of foregoing leveling up all together, the answer was no.

Hunting had a definite reward for the hard work and time invested in. Vulcan was wondering why he should abandon hunting for the sake of gaining more combat experiences from duels.

This was the reason why Vulcan was looking miffed.

“You are thinking about leveling up again.”

“If I said I wasn’t, I would be lying.”

“Why are you so fixated only on leveling up? Little brother. You became stronger by training in the traditional method like me and these men. Isn’t that right? You have no reason to insist on a Player’s method.”



“You are right about that, but I don’t have a reason to be held up taking on an uncertain approach when I know there is an alternative that will definitely get me the results I want.”

“So you are saying that leveling up is the most certain approach?”

“Yes. Is it not?”

“If that is the case, how come other Players are all still weaklings who are not even able to get to the Second-Rate?”

Dokgo Hoo said to Vulcan.

Vulcan was caught off guard. He responded with a little dumbfounded voice,

“... Uh?”

“Little brother, if leveling up was the surest way, and all you have to do is follow that path, how come the Players, the people that are diligently doing exactly that, are crawling on the lowest end of the bottom?”

“ ... ”

Vulcan was at lost for words.

Certainly, it was as Dokgo Hoo just described.

Leveling up through SYSTEM was an arrangement with a definite reward, and the Players followed this path single-mindedly with the goal of leveling up.

However, the average level of such Players was Third-Rate.

Even Uruo, the one that was at least the best of them all, was barely at the lower end of the First-Rate.

On the other hand, by breaking away from repetitive and mechanical hunting, Vulcan reached the new heights from training and enlightenments, and now, after just a few short years, he was able to successfully go past the level 300.

He believed that his momentum in level-up would not falter until he reached level 500, the level Vulcan thought of as his true strength at the moment.

However, Vulcan wondered what would come after reaching level 500.

He was not sure if he would be able to continue leveling up at an abnormally high rate like he was doing now.

“Well, little brother, certainly, you do have a need for leveling up

since you are different from me. You said that, even if you have an enlightenment, you need to level up in order for your body to reach that capability?”

“... That’s right.”

“However, even if you level up to match the capability’s requirement, you will run into yet another wall blocking your path. Well, it would not matter to you if your current abilities are enough to perfectly overwhelm Sarantis... But if not, it is not a bad idea to think about ways to break through the wall.”

Having finished his explanations, Dokgo Hoo grabbed Ultoru, who was standing with a blank face, by the back of his neck and stepped away to a far distance from Vulcan.

Vulcan watched Dokgoo Hoo dragging Ulturu away and peeked a smile.

Vulcan was thankful of Dokgoo Hoo’s consideration for giving Vulcan some alone time to process what he just heard.

‘Although it feels a little awkward.’

Vulcan stretched big. It was enough to make cracking noises. Vulcan drew his blade from the sheath, swung it a few times in the air, and walked toward Dokgo Hoo.

There was no need to think about this for a long time.

Vulcan's mind was already completely refreshed; it was cleared of all tangled up questions.

It was because Dokgo Hoo was right.

‘Once I reach level 500, I’m guessing I would be able to handle a one-on-one battle against Sarantis, but... It is a matter of life and death. I can’t fight such a battle where I am not certain of my victory.’

Vulcan thought that he should reach level 600, or at least 550. By then, he figured would reach a new height that would make him be certain of victory.

Earning the qualification by just leveling up was a way that only worked in lower dimensions.

‘In this place, you need to have the qualification to level up because this place is Asgard.’

Vulcan shouted toward Dokgo Hoo.

“Hey. Big brother!”

“Um? What is it?”

Dokgo Hoo was getting ready to beat the crap out of Ultoru, but

then he turned to look at Vulcan.

“Instead of that poor guy, how about we have a duel? It’s been a while.”

“Huh!”

Dokgo Hoo was proud of Vulcan for having such confident tone of voice, but at the same time, he was thinking that Vulcan was being arrogant toward him. Dokgo Hoo took out his buster sword and pointed it toward Vulcan.

“All right! It’s about time for me to slap around my little brother.”

“Have you forgotten? You have taken on more beating than I have.”

“When it comes to running your mouth, you are beyond Zenith-Rate. You are Ultra-Zenith-Rate. I think it would be able to run around on its own. Really.”

“When it comes to running one’s mouth, I think you are the one with the longer tongue.”

“You won’t give in on even one argument.”

Seo-Whee and Horune, who were having a duel by themselves on

a corner, took Ultoru and moved far away from Dokgo Hoo and Vulcan.

The three essentially turned into spectators.

Besides these three, before anyone realized, there were a few dozen people gathered. They were eating something and waiting for the duel to start.

They were all people dueling in the nearby area.

“No. I mean, why... Why don’t they just go mind their own business...”

“KUHAHAT. A fight between two top-notch warriors is exciting for anyone. If you look at it from another way...”

Dokgo Hoo pointed at himself and Vulcan as he said,

“That means we are strong enough to be called top-notch.”

Vulcan nodded without any words. As if Dokgo Hoo wasn’t expecting any reply either, he continued,

“For the sake of spectators, or for the sake of our pride as warriors, let’s show them what we are really made of.”

“I was already planning on it.”

The battle spirits from the two ignited with intensity.

The aura was powerful enough to cut through leaves flying around in the air.

It was enough to affect even the spectators watching from the far distance.

## **GULP**

They may not be in the Golden Ranking, but the two could be considered as incredibly powerful warriors. In anticipation of the duel between them, the spectators gulped through their dry neck.

It was a rare battle between two super comets.

Everyone was getting heated up from the anticipation of witnessing superb martial arts or ultimate magic techniques.

However, from somewhere, there was a voice could be heard, the kind that was like throwing a bucket of cold water at someone.

“Both the 1st and 2nd places of the Rookie Ranking are here.”

It was an unwelcomed guest.

Wearing a black martial artist getup with highly decorative golden linings, and with his long hair tightly tied, he had the look of a nobility's young master.

After looking at the man, who made an entrance with a smile overflowing with confidence, Dokgo Hoo cringed.

“Just who do you think you are to interfere in others' duel?”

“If it is someone like me, I am more than qualified to interfere in a duel between two rookies.”

With an arrogant glare, the man was staring at Dokgo Hoo and Vulcan, and then he pointed his finger towards Vulcan.

“Are you the 1st place in Rookie Ranking, Vulcan?”

“... That's right, but just what do you think you are? You are getting in our way. Also, you dare to use non-honorary language to someone you don't even know?”

Immediately after Vulcan finished talking, the two men escorting the young master tried to step forward. However, the young master stopped them, and they backed down.

“Huhu. It has been a while since meeting someone spewing out such crass words towards me.”



“What makes you think you can do whatever you want like this?”

“You are right. I did not introduce myself. I figured you would know who I am.”

The young master murmured, implying he was surprised that Vulcan didn't know who he was. He looked at Vulcan and said,

“I, the Order of Virtue's little sky, the sleeping-dragon shining-tiger, request a duel against Vulcan, the Rookie Ranking's 1st place.”

He looked very arrogant with his chin slightly raised up. Looking at him, Dokgo Hoo thought,

‘Who is this retard?’

## Chapter 33 - Troublemakers (Part 3)

---

After the commotion calmed down a little, the spectators assumed their positions to watch again. Actually, there were people that used the time from the interruption and went back to the town and brought their friends.

In middle of the crowd, which increased in number than a moment ago, Dokgo Hoo complained toward Jake,

“Since you insisted on stopping me, I will yield, but just what is so great about that guy that’s making you throw this ruckus?”

“Use telepathic communication, telepathic communication.”

Jake actually came to watch the duels between Dokgo Hoo, Vulcan and the three maniacs, but when he realized the Order of Virtue’s young master showed up, he rushed toward Dokgo Hoo. It was because Jake knew well that Dokgo Hoo suffered from anger control disability.

Fortunately, Jake was able to subdue Dokgo Hoo before he made a scene. Jake dragged Dokgo Hoo to the middle of the spectators so Vulcan and HoGwang could have their duel.

After casting the spell, Jake started using telepathic communication,

- There are people from the Order of Virtue, so you need to watch

what you are saying too.

- Why is the Order of Virtue here?

- That guy is the son of the Order of Virtue's leader, and he is also the Beloong City's greatest asshole, HoGwang.

Dokgo Hoo observed HoGwang who was swinging his sword like he was just playing.

- By the looks of how irritating the guy is, he is more than qualified to be called an ass-clown. It was so out of blue. Why in the world did he get in the way of our duel. Tsk.

- He loves to show off... Looks like Vulcan stood out because he is in the Rookie Ranking's 1st place. He is the kind that don't give a damn about what others have to say, and on top of that, he is pretty powerful, so there aren't many people that can stop him.

- The only language he will listen is a good beating. When the duel is over, I'm going to go over there and personally break his jaw...

- Hey! Did you not hear me? I said he is the son of the Order of Virtue's leader! The master of the largest organization in the Beloong City is that guy's father.

- What about it? If his son comes back home after getting beat up, is the father going to come and fight in his place?

- This man thinks the world of his son. He thinks his son is the most precious thing of all. He might wait for an opportunity and kill you.

Dokgo Hoo looked like he was finding all of this to be ridiculous and unbelievable. He stared at Jake for a moment in silence and then said,

- Why did that runt come all this way to Asgard to flex his muscles around? What does he think he is? A grand priest in an occult sect?

- I don't know much about what you mean by the grand priest thing, but he is indeed throwing his weight around. He doesn't just go demand people for things or cause ruckus without being provoked, but he is the kind that absolutely will not stand by and watch if something happens to make him lose his face or taint the Order of Virtue's reputation.

- Oh my gosh. That's something people would do only in the lower dimensions, so why is he doing that here? I thought you said he is the first place in the Golden Ranking? He would be way better off if he just killed Sarantis, go back to the lower dimension and conquer the whole world.

- How should I know? You never know. Maybe it is quite tasty and fulfilling to stare down at all of these powerful warriors who used to be considered the best in their former dimensions... Ah, it is starting.

- I hope my little brother beat the crap out of this guy.

The two ended their telepathic communication and directed their gaze toward the front.

Vulcan and HoGwang aimed their blades at each other.

\*\*\*

‘This is really disappointing.’

With a stiff expression, Vulcan glared at HoGwang.

‘If it wasn’t for that asshole...’

Although it was not for certain, Vulcan had a strong feeling that he could have gained something from dueling against Dokgo Hoo.

Because of this, Vulcan could not help but to have ill feeling toward HoGwang, the one that made Vulcan lose that opportunity.

What Vulcan heard from Jake about this guy also contributed to making a negative impression.

‘He appear to be pretty skilled and more arrogant than he is worth... He is really prideful.’

He was the type that was full of arrogance and considered everyone else to be beneath him, the kind that Vulcan absolutely hated.

[Zenith-Rate Swordsman HoGwang]

[432Lv]

Looking at the level alone, he was quite a bit more advanced than Horune.

Of course, Vulcan was not thinking he would lose.

The problem was that, if Vulcan gave HoGwang a beating to his heart's satisfaction, then he would be making enemies out of the Order of Virtue.

If Vulcan got involved with the Order of Virtue in the wrong way, an organization that had over a hundred Zenith-Rate warriors, it was obvious that it would cause problems with Vulcan's hunting.

‘Really. Why in the world are these guys playing leader in Asgard? If he wanted to be an emperor, why doesn't he just go back to the lower dimension?’

Vulcan sighed as he thought the same thing Dokgo Hoo did.

Vulcan did not want to lose on purpose. However, he had to give consideration to the opponent's reputation and pride. Because of it, Vulcan couldn't just crush him either.

There was only one alternative left.

‘Looks like I should keep it even for a while and then win.’

Vulcan was thinking about producing a choreography where both sides show off their abilities to their satisfactions, a splendid duel.

Vulcan decided to think of this as a quest.

‘It is more difficult than the Cheetah King. Maybe C+? Although this is not worth anything... I should work hard on this.’

Even if it was just for the sake of peaceful training and level up later on, Vulcan had to do this.

He drew out his blade and activated the Thunder God's Might.

“I am ready.”

“I heard that you broke through the limitation of being a Player,

but aren't you awkwardly trying to imitate a Murim warrior?"

“ ... ”

“Anyway, there were people everywhere praising you, saying you are an incredible prodigy. I shall confirm it for real.”

When HoGwang finished talking, from his behind, ten blades were thrown toward him.

The blades, which were thrown without being covered in sheaths, were just about to pierce through HoGwang's body, but suddenly, as if somebody grabbed them all, the blades stopped mid-air. The blades steadied themselves in mid-air while pointing their deadly edges toward Vulcan.

The pressure from them felt like ten of dangerous poisonous snakes glaring at him.

“Telekinetic Blade...”

“I bet it is your first time to face ten of them at once. Am I right? Have at you!”

The blades were launched toward Vulcan like arrows released from bows.

All blades were engulfed in flashy golden energy.



Vulcan assessed that an Infinite Flame Orb's level of firepower would be not even close to being enough. Instead, he generated ten Hellfires. Vulcan thought that ordinary Hellfires would not be enough, so he put spins on each Hellfires and then launched them toward the blades.

BOOMBOBOM!

Of ten shots, seven made direct hits, but other three blades changed their directions and dodged the magic attacks to fly right at Vulcan again. Vulcan launched Hellfires again to block their momentum, but before long, the other seven blades that recovered from the impacts were circling around Vulcan, targeting him from all directions.

‘It feels totally like a mage.’

While dodging blades flying at him, Vulcan felt a huge energy charging at him from distance.

Vulcan could see HoGwang targeting him using the blade & body synchronization technique.

To avoid the attack, Vulcan quickly generated a Hellfire and exploded it. Using its reaction, Vulcan made a great leap to the air. Using quick draw blade technique, Vulcan shattered a blade that was blocking his path.

Watching the pieces of the blade falling down powerlessly, Vulcan thought,

‘It is not a mage, but more like a mage swordsman type.’

It seemed HoGwang’s combat style involved keeping the opponent busy using a mid-distance offensive measure and finishing off in person with a blade.

Having met an opponent that was similar to himself, Vulcan was intrigued.

Vulcan spread magic attacks against nine blades that were flying toward him again.

He erased the thought of dodging them. When a blade dodged the magic attack, he launched another, and if it avoided that one as well, he cast another magic.

HoGwang was also restless with his Telekinetic Blade technique. Whenever he lost his mental connection to a blade from impact with a Hellfire, he focused his mind immediately to re-establish the connection and repeated launching it yet again toward vulnerable spots on Vulcan’s entire body.

It was suppose to be a duel between a swordsman and a mage swordsman.

People were expecting a face to face combat, but the two were

showing a very different kind of battle.

BOOMBOBOBOOM... BOOMBOOM!

The arrays of blades and magic attacks decorating the sky continued for many hours. However, slowly, little by little, the Goddess of Victory was raising Vulcan's hand.

It was because Vulcan's mana operation technique was superior to HoGwang's Telekinetic Blade technique.

Actually, Vulcan was not particularly taxed by continuously shooting magic and controlling them.

In the contrary, it had been a while since Vulcan used precision control through the traditional magic, and he found fun in the activity.

It appeared that he was not showing any sign of exhaustion from the mental focus required.

Instead, it sharpened his mind, and the movement of Hellfires became more precise, and this became a heavy obstacle for HoGwang, who was getting exhausted from sustaining the Telekinetic Blade technique for an extended period of time.

CRASH!

“...!”

At the moment the number of blades was reduced to eight, HoGwang made a decision.

Vulcan was staring at him without any gap in the defense, but HoGwang had no other options.

He just hoped that Vulcan would fight head-on against the attack he was about to do instead of dodging it.

At an instant, HoGwang's body got sucked into a blade, and a ray of energy blade was launched toward Vulcan.

It was at an instant, but Vulcan still had moments to spare. Because Vulcan was in the state of heightened senses, even as he effectively blocked HoGwang's Telekinetic Blade attacks, he was still able to notice all of HoGwang's movements.

Because of this, Vulcan was able to think about how to handle what's coming.

He thought about if he should dodge it or fight it head-on.

‘Just fight it head-on.’

If Vulcan kept on dodging HoGwang's Blade & Body synchronization technique and maintained the flow of the battle as

it was, that would have guaranteed his victory.

However, if Vulcan beat HoGwang flawlessly, an arrogant man like HoGwang could have ill intent toward him.

Vulcan was not forgetting what he was planning to do before the duel started.

‘It has to be a close duel. When it ends... it should be about 55 to 45!’

Against HoGwang that approached to right in front of him, Vulcan used the Thunder God’s Strike.

However, he wasn’t aiming at HoGwang, but his blade.

KWAAAANG!

Having taken on substantial damage, HoGwang’s blade cracked a little.

HoGwang, who was in the state of blade & body synchronization, received a substantial damage as well. He fell back down as he threw up blood.

However, it was not just HoGwang that was injured.

Two blades that were targeting Vulcan's side passed by after cutting deep into Vulcan's thigh and left arm.

Of course, that was the end of the duel.

HoGwang no longer had any more strength left to sustain his Telekinetic Blade technique.

The blades fell to the ground, making a clashing sound.

HoGwang got up as he bled from his mouth and faltered.

On the other hand, although Vulcan had pretty big blade wounds, he was still standing in dignifying pose. There was nobody contesting his victory.

“HoGwang lost.”

“Well, from the looks of how the duel went between Horune and Vulcan, I figured Vulcan had a bit of advantage...”

“Still, that was amazing. It is quite an accomplishment that he managed to fight this well against a mage swordsman of Vulcan's caliber.”

“I know. He is a graduate in training.”

“He might graduate faster than Dokgo Hoo. HoGwang lost, but he fought well.”

Positive reviews were given from the people that watched the duel.

The duel concluded after both the loser and the winner have demonstrated magnificent skills.

Everyone was impressed by the high level duel that could be seen only in Asgard, and they took moments to reflect on their own techniques and magic.

However, there was a man that poured cold water to this amiable atmosphere.

“I cannot acknowledge this.”

After drinking special potion that his servants gave, HoGwang said as he grinded his teeth,

“Start the duel over.”

Vulcan was applying potion to his arm and thigh where blood was pouring out. Having heard what he said, Vulcan cringed and replied,

“Wasn’t it a great duel? Honestly, I think I have won.”

“No. This duel was unfair.”

“Just what exactly?”

In light of Vulcan’s impatient words, HoGwang slightly wrinkled his forehead and pointed somewhere with his finger.

There were pieces of shattered blade that Vulcan broke first.

As Vulcan looked at the pieces with a quizzical face, HoGwang said,

“The quality of the blades I had was no good. I was fighting with a disadvantage. If I started with proper blades, I could have won.”

“ ... ”

“One of my servants is bringing me quality blades. We will start the duel one hour from now. There, we will finish this.”

The spectators murmured.

No matter who looked at the situation, it was obvious that HoGwang was throwing a tantrum out of stubbornness.

Some murmured words of complaints, but there wasn’t anyone



stepping forward.

They were uncomfortable about getting involved with the Order of Virtue, which were made of warriors far stronger than themselves. Also, it was because there wasn't anyone acquainted with Vulcan.

Not including the time spent training under Filder, Vulcan's actual time spent in Beloong City out in the open with everyone was less than one year. Because hardly anyone was acquainted with Vulcan, there was practically nobody willing to stand by in his side in this matter.

Vulcan shook his head as he watched what HoGwang was doing.

HoGwang's tantrum in denial was giving him a headache.

'To think that a dumbass like him is the top level warrior among all in Beloong city where the strongest gather...'

Vulcan suddenly recalled some of what Jake said,

'He said even idiots, birdbrains, or stoneheads can become powerful warriors. I guess it really is true. Ah, this is not important.'

Vulcan turned around to hide the expression on his face. In that stance, he tried hard to organize his head, which was now in disarray with convoluted thoughts.

However, it was not going well.

Vulcan just managed to produce a good result from the duel, and it ended with very approving atmosphere by the spectators, yet it still ended up turning this way.

It looked like no matter how Vulcan handled things from this point, the end result would be something incredibly annoying.

‘Should I just lose on purpose?’

Like most warriors, Vulcan also had a very strong sense of pride, so he didn’t like losing as if it was an illness.

However, causing problems for his journey back home, which was going to be a smooth ride, was worse.

‘That’s right. I should just lose on purpose this once.’

After Vulcan made up his mind, his chest felt lighter. Vulcan smiled and turned toward HoGwang with a bright expression on his face.

However, at that moment, he could see Dokgo Hoo running toward HoGwang at a high speed.

KWAAAANG!

“You brainless runt! Just why are you still yapping your mouth?  
You lost you retard!”

Dokgo Hoo smacked the back of HoGwang’s head when he was waiting for the potion to take effect.

“...!”

Vulcan watched the scene with his jaw dropped.

The spectators just watched Dokgo Hoo in silence.

## Chapter 34 - Troublemakers (Part 4)

---

“You... bastard... How dare you ambush me... Ho-Gwang the sleeping dragon...”

**THUMP**

Ho-Gwang was glaring at Dokgo Hoo with red eyes, but he collapsed after losing consciousness.

As he spat toward Ho-Gwang, Dokgo Hoo said,

“What did you say? You retard.”

The two servants of Ho-Gwang drew their swords at an instant and stepped forward. Dokgo Hoo looked at them with a relaxed gaze.

“What. Are you going to jump me?”

“How dare you! You disgraced the Order of Virtue’s young master!”

“So are you going to fight me?”

“What you have done shall be repaid in blood!”

“You sons of bitches... So, I’m asking you. Are you going to come at me?”

Dokgo Hoo stood there like a giant mountain.

Feeling like they were facing a mountain that was absolutely impossible to climb, a glimpse of hesitation showed in the two warriors’ expressions.

The two were about First-Rate levels.

Even if they fought in 2:1, they were aware that the ones that would suffer humiliation would be themselves.

However, they could not just step back like this.

Ho-Gwang’s father, Ho-Gyung’s punishments were infamous for being extremely cruel.

Although he wasn’t the kind to kill without a reason, if they ran in this situation, they would not be able to avoid death.

“H... HUUUAAAP!”

“Wait!”

By someone’s shouting, the two servants stopped their

movements. One of the servants was shocked in fear as he realized that Dokgo Hoo's blade was already at his throat.

‘When did he...!’

A thin stream of blood was flowing down from his neck. The man could not do anything.

Dokgo Hoo pulled back his blade. Along with a difficult breathing, Ho-Gwang's servants stepped back, and while maintaining their state of alert, they directed their gazes toward the direction of the voice.

There was Folken, who is one of The Six and also the captain of the patrol, walking toward this way with three patrol members.

Folken's eyes observed the surroundings.

His gaze stopped once at Ho-Gwang who was laying the ground, and his gaze moved to his servants. Folken said with a stern voice toward the two servants who winched in light of his gaze,

“Take him and get lost.”

“B... But.”

“I received a call, and I came here after figuring out what's going on here, so how about you just get going? That is, before I arrest

you all.”

“... Yes.”

The two carried Ho-Gwang on their backs and quickly disappeared.

Folken shouted in a loud voice after looking at the spectators, Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo, who were murmuring by themselves,

“From now on, if anyone doesn’t accept defeat and throws a tantrum over the result of a duel, I am not going to go easy on you. Got that?! Everyone, get lost!”

\*\*\*

Jake’s residence was on of multi-level buildings in Beloong City. To avoid people’s eyes, Jake brought Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo to his home and started to scold Dokgo Hoo.

“You. Just why are you like that?”

“What.”

Dokgo Hoo poked at his ear with a look on his face as if he had no idea what Jake was talking about. Seeing him like that made Jake furious. Forgetting Dokgo Hoo’s level or personality, Jake yelled at him in a loud voice,

“I told you! He is the son of the Order of Virtue’s leader! After being humiliated like that, do you think the Order of Virtue is going to just let it slide? They have several thousand members and a hundred Zenith-Rate warriors! Just what were you thinking?”

“Nothing much. All I did was disciplining a runt who was throwing a tantrum. What’s the big deal here?”

By Dokgo Hoo’s lax attitude, Jake asked out of pure curiosity,

“You, do you have two lives or something? Or do you just not have any sense of fear? How could you act so casual?”

Looking displeased, Dokgo Hoo stared at Jake for moment and said,

“For a bandit...”

“What about a bandit?”

“For a bandit, one’s pride is his life.”

“... What?”

“A bandit has to have pride! If you are going to ask me to ignore a runt like him who was yapping away, I rather die.”



Neither Vulcan nor Jake could say a word.

Dokgo Hoo asked Vulcan,

“Why? Do I look weird to you too?”

“... Honestly, it is not following common sense.”

“You don’t know much about a mountain bandit, do you? You rascal, a true bandit is...”

Dokgo Hoo slammed the desk hard enough to make a loud noise and said,

“If a bandit doesn’t have pride, he is instantly treated as just a garbage to be taken advantage of. You got it? Once a rumor like that spreads, then that would be the day when my career ends. If a bandit doesn’t have pride or guts, who is going to be crazy enough to pay the passage toll?”

“Huh, for a silly reason like that...”

“Silly?”

Dokgo Hoo interrupted Jake and continued on with more force in his voice,

“As a leader of 108 green mountains, I lived like this through my entire life. The moment I lose my pride, my title as the greatest sword in the green mountains is also over. If that’s how it is going to be, I might as well just go belly up.”

“...”

“Especially, when that runt who isn’t even worth a piece of shit was causing ruckus, if I held in even for a moment longer, I would have died from frustration.”

As Vulcan listened to Dokgo Hoo’s words, he felt rather refreshed.

It sounded a little retarded, but Vulcan thought Dokgo Hoo was being a cool retard, and it made Vulcan say ‘Big Brother’ effortlessly,

“Big brother, although I don’t want to admit it, your thoughts have a point.”

“That’s right! My little brother, you do know something, don’t you?! HaHa!”

Jake, who had been leading a peaceful life for 50 years after leaving his lower dimension, could not agree to Dokgo Hoo’s words.

However, seeing how Dokgo Hoo was saying things with such stubbornness, it looked to Jake that trying to talk to him would be pointless.

Moreover, it was already a spilled milk. It was also pointless to carefully go over and assign faults.

“Ugh. I don’t know anymore. It is not even my business. It is ridiculous that I’m agonizing over this so much and getting headache.”

Jake took out a cigarette and held it on his mouth. Vulcan snapped his finger and lit up his cigarette.

“Ah, thanks.”

“By the way, that Ho-Gang? Ho-Gwang? Whatever. That son of the Order of Virtue’s leader. About that guy...”

“Yeah. You have something you want to ask?”

“Even if he is the son of the man holding the first place in the Golden Ranking, he completely lacks common sense or courtesy. Was he always like that? Also, how did a son and a father both come to Asgard? This is just unbelievable.”

“You sure have a lot of questions. Well, is it because you are half a mage?”

Jake breathed out to blow out the smoke and said,

“Ho-Gwang is a son that the Order of Virtue's leader, Blade King Ho-Gyung, had when he was in the lower dimension. From the bloodline alone, Ho-Gwang overflows with talent. I heard that Ho-Gwang arrived by the time Ho-Gyung became the strongest in the Beloong City. It is an incredible coincidence.”

“...”

“Most of the warriors that reach Asgard feel defeated and lose their sense of pride after seeing other powerful warriors who are beyond themselves. However, in case of Ho-Gwang, from the start, he had a tremendous support called Blade King Ho-Gyung. Through his entire life, he had been riding on Ho-Gyung's care, so it is no wonder his personality is shit.”

As if he understood, Vulcan nodded. He then asked,

“I see. I wondered if he got married here and then Ho-Gwang was born or something.”

“The Order of Virtue's leader does have a wife, but... it appears pregnancy is not possible in this dimension.”

“So there is a woman in this dimension. I have not seen any so far.”

“There are only ten women, so it is very hard to even get a glimpse of them. On top of that, three of them are Ho-Gyung’s wives. The other five are members of the Holy Denomination of War, and I heard that they are battle maniacs who stay in the hunting grounds for 20 hours a day.”

Jake came next to Vulcan and quietly whispered to him in his ear,

“The other two are masters of sexual techniques who can rejuvenate themselves by absorbing sexual energies from men. If it is a top-notch warrior like you, I think they will treat you, so let me know if you are interested.”

Vulcan was stunned for a while, but he regained his senses by Dokgo Hoo’s roar.

“WHAT! 19990 men are suffering because they don’t have a mate, but that guy has three wives? This bastard is totally a thug!”

“... I understand how you feel, but what can we do? Women say they like him. He is the strongest in the Beloong City, and he also one of the most influential man here. They must have been attracted to him.”

Jake shook his head, indicating that the conversation went off the tangent. Jake continued,

“Anyway, this incident is bigger than what you think. After Ho-

Gyung came to Asgard, he wasn't expecting to be able to see his son ever again, but they were miraculously re-united. Also, his son has tremendous talent. If you were Ho-Gyung, how would that make you feel?"

"..."

"Ho-Gwang has an incredible talent, enough to satisfy Ho-Gyung's expectations. Ho-Gwang is an asshole, but he is skilled enough to act the way he does. It hasn't even been a 100 years since Ho-Gwang came to Asgard, but he is already at Zenith-Rate. If we excluded you two, he is more than qualified to be called the best talent in the Beloong City. From Ho-Gyung's perspective, Ho-Gwang is a precious son that wouldn't hurt even if he poked Ho-Gyung in the eyes."

Having explained this far, Jake sighed big enough to make the ground sink. With eyes full of sympathy, Jake looked at Vulcan and said,

"To someone like that, you didn't just fight him a little, but instead, you totally humiliated him in front of everyone. I can see massive storm clouds up ahead of you all."

Vulcan was quietly listening to what Jake had to say, but he suddenly tilted his head to the side. It was because something was odd about Jake's explanation. It felt like Jake was including Vulcan in to the explanation as the subject.

"Excuse me. I'm asking because I'm really curious."

“Um?”

“Why are you including me as well?”

“Um? What about it?”

“The one that smacked the back of Ho-Gwang was the big brother Dokgo Hoo. It was not me.”

Jake’s face was saying to Vulcan that he could not believe how clueless Vulcan was. Jake gave an additional explanation.

“From the start, all this happened starting with you, didn’t it? From Ho-Gwang’s perspective, when the duel wasn’t even over yet, ‘your big brother’ Dokgo Hoo interfered and embarrassed him. How can you say this is just Dokgo Hoo’s problem? It is also your problem.”

“ ... ”

Having heard what Jake said, Vulcan froze like a statue without thoughts for any movement.

For 10 ~ 20 seconds, with unfocused eyes, Vulcan stared at empty space, and then he suddenly got up and pointed a finger at Dokgo Hoo.

“You god damn old man! Just look at what you have done!”

“What? Old man? How dare you talk like that to your big brother!”

“Big brother? Like hell it is! Just follow me outside right now! Let’s just have the duel that we didn’t get to!”

“Indeed. I shall teach you a lesson and correct your bad habits, little brother!”

“Where are you going to have the duel?”

The two were growling at each other, but then they both turned their heads toward Jake.

“To have a duel, you both need to go to outside of the city, but the moment you do step outside the city, people from the Order of Virtue will probably come at you. When it comes to things happening outside the city, even Folken or the patrol don’t make a move without being notified.”

“As long as we are sticking to somewhere nearby the city...”

“I told you earlier, didn’t I? There are 100 of Zenith-Rate warriors in the Order of Virtue. If you have the confidence for surviving these warriors who are hell bent on killing you until the patrol arrives, then by all means go outside the city. Otherwise, for the time being, keep your heads down and stay within the city.”



“... I’m saying this just in case there is a slim chance. Is there a possibility that Mr. Filder or Mr. Beruneru will help...”

“The Six does not interfere in matters that are out of their assigned jurisdictions. It seems that they have a rule among themselves that they follow. Even though The Six is one of the three factions, when it comes to this faction... to explain it in a way that would be easiest for you to understand, they are like non-player-characters. Don’t expect getting help from them.”

“... Ugh.”

Vulcan put his hand on his forehead and tossed his body to the sofa as if he was collapsing.

“UUUAAAAAAAAA!”

After screaming out loud, Vulcan spat out murmurs in a weak voice,

“I’m trying to lead a quiet life here, but why does incidents and troubles never end...”

“... I will think hard with you all to figure out a way to get through this.”

Jake said with a sympathetic face.

“Thank you.”

Vulcan expressed his gratitude and closed his eyes quietly.

\*\*\*

The night was especially dark with even the moon blocked by clouds. In middle of the night, the two men met.

The man with short blonde hair and fierce eyes, Horune spoke,

“Just what business do you have with me?”

“ ... ”

The other man only smiled big.

Horune, in an agitated state that was more so than the usual, put more strength to his voice and said,

“I don’t know what kind of bull crap scheme you are trying to pull here. If you have nothing to say, then I’m going back.”

As if he was trying to show he was not just saying that, Horune turned his body right away and started to walk. Before he went three steps, the other man’s voice could be heard,

“It looked like a request was made to the Holy Denomination of War. Is that right?”

To Horune, who came to a stop, the man continued,

“It seems the end result was not very good...”

“If you are here to belittle me, then why don’t you stop it here?”

Horune rapidly, and roughly, turned around toward the man, fast enough to make his clothes flap in the air. Horune glared right at the man’s eyes and said to the man as if he was chewing and spitting out the words,

“Go straight to the point and make it brief. Otherwise, I’m going to leave. Lee Jung-Yup.”

“I got it. Oh my, you really don’t know how to relax.”

Lee Jung-Yup smiled big with his white teeth showing.

# Chapter 35 - The Holy Denomination Of War

---

Although Horune was the one pressuring on with his violent tone of voice, Lee Jung-Yup was the one that had more nerve to spare.

Only three years ago, Lee Jung-Yup was below Horune but now, the situation was different.

In Beloong City where the strongest of the lower dimensions gather, Lee Jung-Yup was one of the strongest of them all and counted as one of the top ten warriors.

He was not the kind of opponent that would listen just because Horune yelled at him.

With a smiling face, Lee Jung-Yup approached Horune and said,

“To the Holy Denomination of War... try talking to them once again.”

Hearing Lee Jung-Yup’s whisper, Horune cringed between his eyes.

Horune talked right back,

“What are you plotting?”

“I’m not plotting anything. I’m just worried about your friends,

so I'm trying to help.”

“For someone who is just a lapdog of the Order of Virtue, you sure can yap.”

“Hey, hey. A lapdog? Come on, I have a cool title called a Senior Officer.”

“Are you going to keep on joking around? Just what are you trying to manipulate me in to doing? Why are you doing this?”

“What? Manipulate you? Here I am personally being proactive to look after the two new guys, but I have to be treated with such harsh words?”

Lee Jung-Yup's smile thickened. His eyes, which were narrowly open like a snake, were staring at Horune.

As he broke cold sweats from Lee Jung-Yup's gaze, Horune said,

“... Tell me your end game. If you are trying to lead them into a trap... I cannot accept it.”

As he finished his words, Horune raised his staff to the front.

A strong resolve, the kind that stated he will not yield regardless of powerful force or threat, could be felt.

Against Horune making such a stand, Lee Jung-Yup glared at Horune with fierce eyes.

The two men's gazes collided violently in midair for about a minute.

Lee Jung-Yup raised his hands above his shoulders and took a step back.

“Looks like you are about to kill me with your glaring. I wonder why everyone has the wrong perception about me. They all think I'm the type that would stab someone in the back with a smile on my face. Geez.”

Lee Jung-Yup complained, and then with a serious face, he continued,

“Maybe you misunderstood because I said it jokingly, but I was being serious. The situation in the Holy Denomination of War has changed. Now, the denomination probably will accept them regardless of where they came from.”

“... I haven't heard anything about such changes.”

“By chance, are you thinking you are better than me at information?”

Certainly, when it came to information network, there was a big difference between Horune, who did not belong to any factions,

and Lee Jung-Yup, a high-ranking officer in the Order of Virtue.

Toward Horune, who was in a deep thought, Lee Jung-Yup started his long-winded explanation.

“Anyhow. What I told you is the truth. Now, the denomination probably will not say no to them. Also, this is the only way for them to avoid the heat from the Order of Virtue. If you are still feeling suspicious about me, then it would be all right if you went and found out more about it. Although it would be pointless since I’m not scheming anything. Ah, and... when you explain this to anyone, it would be better if you didn’t mention my name. Not just for my sake, but for the two men’s sake as well.”

As soon as Lee Jung-Yup finished his explanation, he disappeared without a trace.

By a feat becoming of the nick name, shadow warrior, Lee Jung-Yup’s ghost like move surprised Horune.

Still, instead of accepting what Lee Jung-Yup just explained, Horune thought about it carefully.

For a long time, deep in thought, Horune stood there without any movement.

---

“... And so, in conclusion, I recommend the two of you to join the Holy Denomination of War.”

“I totally agree!”

Jake expressed his approval as soon as Horune’s explanation ended.

As for Vulcan, because he didn’t know anything about these kind of things, he just sat there.

However, it was different for Dokgo Hoo. As if he had a sound amplifier in his body, a loud voice exploded from him.

“NO WAY!”

“Why not!”

“In Beloong City, the only vessels that could have me under their wings are The Six, nobody else!”

“Unbelievable! If you weren’t a Zenith-Rate warrior, I would have just...!”

Frustrated, Jake pounded at his chest as he watched Dokgo Hoo being stubborn as always.

As for Vulcan, with a calm face, he asked a question to Horune.



“If you are talking about the Holy Denomination of War, it is a faction with a man from Powell as the Archbishop, right? Mr. Horune, since you are also from the Powell... does that mean you are also a member of the denomination?”

“No. I am not.”

Horune paused for a moment and then continued,

“Although I personally worship Powell, the Holy Denomination of War is not a proper denomination. It is just a self-serving group. Because I hated that, I didn’t join it. However... because they are like that, it would also probably mean they won’t have a big problem with accepting you two either.”

He meant that the denomination won’t question their faith or origins. Horune’s explanation continued.

“Although I am not a member, I do have some ties with people who are in the denomination, so I can make recommendations for you guys. I think this is the best option. The only way to get away from the influence of the Order of Virtue is to join a faction that is on an equal footing. I will leave the decision up to you guys.”

Vulcan moved his gaze from Horune to Jake. Before Vulcan could even ask, Jake said in a loud voice,

“Of course! You need to go and join! You must no matter what! If you don’t, both of you will have to check if your head is still

attached to your body every time any of you go outside the gate!”

“If I join them, will that guarantee our safety?”

“Ah of course it will! It is not like they are going to get body guards for you, but unless the Order of Virtue intends to start a war, they won’t try to do anything to you guys. I guarantee it. The problem is, I heard that it is pretty difficult to join the denomination...”

Jake looked at Horune quick and then continued,

“Well, since Horune said he has connections, it probably will work out fine. Just hurry and say thank you.”

“Huh. I didn’t say I would go join a place like tha...”

“Big brother.”

Vulcan got up from the sofa and approached Dokgo Hoo.

After suddenly grabbing his hand, Vulcan started to talk with a serious look on his face.

“Please... please, I beg you. Please let’s go along with the easy way. Let’s sacrifice our pride a little and join them so we can train comfortably.”

“... Hm...”

“Once you become Ultra-Zenith-Rate or beyond or whatnot, when you become incredibly strong, you can beat the crap out of them all then, isn’t that right? For now, please consider my circumstances and let’s just quietly do as Mr. Horune said.”

Vulcan gritted his teeth and continued,

“Please.”

“... Hm... Hm... Well, since my little brother is saying it that way...”

This was the first time Dokgo Hoo saw Vulcan looking so desperate. Seeing him acting like that, Dokgo Hoo decided to yield.

Vulcan turned his gaze toward Horune. Before long, Vulcan quickly changed his expression back to a bright face and expressed his gratitude toward Horune.

“It is not like this is your business, yet you care so much about us. Thank you so much.”

“No. If you actually think about it, I felt that my stubborn request for a duel resulted in a butterfly effect and lead to this, so I was feeling responsible for it. If I am being helpful by doing this, then that’s still a fortunate thing.”

“Yes. It really is a big help.”

Vulcan was honestly thanking Horune from bottom of his heart.

Without Horune’s help, Vulcan would need to live under tense alertness until the Order of Virtue’s anger subsided.

Vulcan would not be able to level up much either.

In such a circumstance, all Vulcan could do would be hunting a few monsters nearby the Beloong City’s gate before anyone notices.

‘I am so sick of these factions... and political struggles... Stupid stuff about saving faces and pride... I am so sick of them, really. Looks like places where people live are all same...’

Even when Vulcan was in the Rubel Continent, there was a time when he got sucked into a conflict by some small country. Because Vulcan had an experience in such a thing, he started to really hate Beloong City.

His head was filling up with thoughts about getting stronger fast and leaving the place.

Vulcan shook his head vigorously, hoping to chase away all of the complicated thoughts.

“ ... ”

Horune watched Vulcan who was being like that.

Other than during a battle, Horune usually had emotionless expression on his face, but today, it looked even more so than usual.

‘Will they be all right?’

Horune’s worry became deeper.

It was true that he knew someone inside the denomination. However, when he asked for help for the first time, he was rejected. It was a definite rejection that left no room for an afterthought.

Horune was disappointed and worried ever since, but right after Lee Jung-Yup paid Horune a visit, things instantly changed.

‘Even if I dug around on the side, it probably won’t turn up anything suspicious, but...’

Horune just could not figure out the true intent of Lee Jung-Yup the shadow warrior.

His existence was making Horune’s mind unable to ease from

worries.

Horune looked at Vulcan, Dokgo Hoo and Jake, lightly said his goodbyes, and left Jake's residence.

Horune's head was still full of worries about Lee Jung-Yup, but there wasn't anything in particular that Horune could do to solve it.

“... Should I just go and do some dueling?”

Horune started heading toward where Seo-Whee and Ultoru might be.

The matter was no longer in his hands.

All he could do now was hoping Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo would get through this safely.

---

The Holy Denomination of War's temple was a gigantic dorm structure building, reminiscent of the ancient Rome's Pantheon.

The gigantic temple was located in middle of other buildings that looked like just bunch of square shaped match cases stacked up. The temple looked like it was showing off the status that the denomination held in the Beloong City.

However, to Vulcan or Dokgo Hoo, the building didn't make much of an impression.

When it came to Dokgo Hoo's opinion, he was full of himself to begin with, and he was the kind that firmly believed that, other than himself, there wasn't anyone or anything that was impressive. When it came to Vulcan, because of the conflict with the Order of Virtue, his mind was in a state of complete disarray, so he had no strength left to be impressed by anything.

The two men's attitude was making some of the denomination members feel uncomfortable, but that didn't bother Vulcan in particular.

Instead, there was something else that Vulcan was concerned with.

'So, what they are saying is, he is definitely beyond the Zenith-Rate, right?'

Even in Asgard's standard, this man they were about to meet was an Ultra-Zenith-Rate.

He was known to be one of the most powerful warrior in the city who could claim 80 ~ 90% chance of victory if he was to face Sarantis right now.

Right behind Ho-Gyung the blade king, the man held the second place in the Golden Ranking for several hundred years.

'The Archbishop of the Holy Denomination of War, Battle King

Bellon.'

Jake said Bellon was at least a reasonable man who is amicable and a straight shooter.

However, the thing that Vulcan was most curious about the man was not his personality.

'I wonder what his level is.'

Due to his curiosity, Vulcan's steps gradually started to speed up.

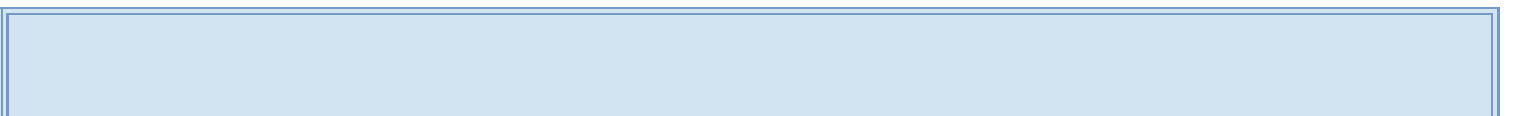
Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo walked across a wide area inside the temple and approached Bellon.

They could see a giant sitting comfortably on a lavishly decorated large chair.

It was a man with white skin who was wearing a flame-like red color pants with his upper body fully exposed.

'Looks like most of the people from Powell are giants.'

Vulcan scanned Bellon's level as he thought about such an irrelevant topic.





[Ultra-Zenith-Rate Warrior Bellon the Blade King]

[533Lv]

“You seem to have no fear.”

It looked like he said it quietly, but the voice echoed throughout the entire temple.

Having demonstrated his overwhelming voice, Bellon the battle king raised his finger and pointed it at Vulcan.

“You.”

“Yes?”

“You just check my level, didn’t you?”

Vulcan panicked for a moment, but he answered honestly.

It was because there did not appear to be anything to be gained from lying about it.

“Yes. That’s right.”

“You are quite impudent. Really impudent. Other Players are not

able to even look at me in the eyes, but you, you are standing with your head held high and shoulders wide open. You are exuding pride becoming of the Rookie Ranking's 1st place."

"Thank you."

At first, Vulcan thought Bellon was going to criticize him, but Bellon's words were rather favorable.

Before they came in, Vulcan wondered if he should swallow his pride and act humble, but now he decided to just act like himself.

"Shall I call you the Archbishop? I have a question."

"Archbishop or the battle king. It doesn't matter. What's the question?"

"I believe 99% of the denomination's members are from Powell. Archbishop, I'm wondering why you allowed us to join the denomination when you are aware that I'm a Player and my big brother Dokgo Hoo is from Murim."

"Well, that's not a hard question to answer."

Bellon continued nonchalantly after taking a sip from a blood-like red wine,

"Our god Powell is a god of war. He favors those who are

passionate about battles.”

Bellon pointed at Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo each and continued,

“If we are not going to accept men like you who are strong and passionate about battles, then the denomination might as well not exist.”

“If that was the case, there doesn’t appear to be that many Players or people from Murim in the denomination?”

“You don’t need to be so surprised by that. They refuse to come in the first place. It is not like I can drag them here and force them to join. As for the Players, other than Uruo, everyone else was lacking qualifications. We always welcome elite warriors like you two.”

“Is that really all?”

“Of course, that’s not all of the reasons.”

The area around Vulcan’s eyes winced slightly. Dokgo Hoo, with a dumbfounded face, stared at Bellon.

Bellon grinned at the two and explained,

“There is not a soul in the city that doesn’t know about the two of you having infuriated the Order of Virtue’s leader. I can’t just

handle that kind of heat without some compensation. Hey you, Vulcan, right? You are here to ensure your own safety using the denomination, right?”

“... That is right.”

“Good. I like that you are honest.”

Bellon emptied the bottle and tossed it to the back. The bottle made a crashing sound as it shattered. Bellon continued,

“Among the runts that join the denomination, there are quite a few that did because they could not handle the grudge by themselves. I usually let them join without accusing them about their motives. However, in this case, it is not like you bought bad-blood with some officer in the Order of Virtue. The leader of the Order is holding grudges against both of you. It is the first time to see someone in your situation crawling to me so shamelessly. Honestly, I was thinking about just ignoring the request, but you two seem quite useful.”

“When you say we seem quite useful...”

“That’s right.”

Bellon smiled and said to Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo,

“I will let you two join the denomination. However, in return, I want the two of you to do something for me.”

# Chapter 36 - The Holy Denomination Of War (Part 2)

---

Vulcan was so fed up with the situation.

Because he thought he was training and hunting quietly without causing any harm to others, he felt he was wronged to be dragged into political affairs of others like this. Vulcan felt frustrated.

However, he had no other options.

The man that Vulcan was facing was more powerful, and he also had plenty of back up.

Although it was making his inside boil, Vulcan felt he should listen to what Bellon had to say first.

“What kind of job is it? By chance, it wouldn’t be the kind that would put my life at risk, right?”

“Hm ... A little?”

Dokgo Hoo cringed his face immediately. Still, because Vulcan pleaded and begged him earlier, he didn’t make any sudden move.

Prior to the meeting, Dokgo Hoo agreed to let Vulcan lead all of the conversation.

With a glance, Vulcan observed Dokgo Hoo's displeased face and then said to Bellon,

“We are joining the denomination for the sake of our safety, but it seems you are intending to send me to the grave as soon as I join.”

“No. I'm just telling you that there is danger involved. With your level of skill, you should be able to handle it well, probably.”

The word ‘probably’ was really rubbing Vulcan the wrong way. Vulcan was about to ask again, but Bellon beat him to it and said,

“Between Ho-Gyung and I, we have a proxy duel that we are suppose to hold. Ah, don't bother thinking about what the duel is for since it has nothing to do with you guys.”

“...”

“The thing is, we don't have anyone to send as the proxy fighter. So, I want one of you to enter the duel as my proxy fighter.”

Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo were joining the denomination to avoid the Order of Virtue, yet the man was asking them to fight another duel against the order. Vulcan thought,

‘There is no bullshit that could top this. Anyway, besides that,

this is suppose to be the Holy Denomination of War, one of the three factions, yet they don't have anyone that can go?'

Vulcan asked,

"I apologize for prying, but I cannot help but to ask. The Holy Denomination of War has incredibly powerful top-notch warriors amongst its members. It is not easy to believe that the denomination does not have anyone that could enter the proxy duel."

"That sure is. It's understandable that you think it is not believable, but it is the truth. I don't have anyone in particular that I could send out to the proxy duel."

"Is there qualification criteria of some kind?"

"That's right. You are very quick on figuring things out."

Bellon put his hand toward his back, and a subordinate that was standing behind brought a new drink.

"This isn't the first time when things like this happened between me and that bastard. If I send someone from the Golden Ranking's top 100 every time there is a quarrel, and if, by a rotten luck, the one I sent to the duel dies, my force will be eventually diminished to half. In that case, I might as well just go out and fight a full scale war like we really mean it. It seems even Ho-Gyung doesn't want to waste his own subordinates. He proposed a new method since a

hundred years ago, the kind that would reduce bleeding on both sides.”

“So, what you are saying is ...”

“For the proxy duel, only the ones outside of the Golden Ranking may enter. It could be called a battle of rising talents. Also, I think the two of you are the most talented of all people who are not in the Golden Ranking.”

Bellon smiled.

“Also, I don’t want to risk losing a rising talent among my regular members. On the other hand, if it is you, even if you died, it is no-risk for me.”

“You care deeply about your own subordinates. It’s different from how you treat us.”

“Of course. They have been like my families for over a hundred years. Also, they worship our god Powell with strong devotion. Outsiders like you cannot be compared to our devoted subjects.”

“Aren’t we members of the denomination now? You are still treating us like outsiders.”

“Of course you guys are outsiders. You calculating bastards.”



Bellon took a sip from the drink and continued,

“You two are bastards who rolled their brains and decided to join just to avoid the pouring rain. Were you expecting us to treat you like brothers? Instead, let’s go with give-and-take.”

Vulcan wanted to talk back at Bellon, but he didn’t have anything in particular to fire back at Bellon.

It was true that they came to the denomination to avoid the threat of the order. Also, they didn’t have any sense of devotion toward the denomination either.

To put it bluntly, or to put it in a crass manner, they just wanted to use the denomination.

Vulcan thought that even he wouldn’t have liked this if he was in Bellon’s position.

‘I was assuming Bellon was letting us join because of his goodwill toward Horune, but it looks like I was mistaken.’

It became apparent that Bellon allowed them to join because he had a use for them.

Having arrived at this conclusion, Vulcan’s head cleared. He actually felt better that Bellon was honest and said he can’t trust them.

Vulcan actually thought this was ten times better than hair-splitting politicians from Rubel Continent that schemed behind his back.

Vulcan said to Bellon,

“Before I accept the proposal, I have something I want to ask.”

“Go ahead.”

“Since you said it is a give-and-take, I wish to get a definite answer about what I will be getting from this. If one of us wins in the proxy duel, I would like you to guarantee our safety.”

“I felt it a while before too, but you really are an impudent one. Fine. If anything, I will certainly stop the Order of Virtue from pressuring you guys. Since both of you are Zenith levels, you will be spending a lot of time in the north gate area. I will be mindful to make it so you two can train safely in our protection.”

“May I assume you mean that you will be providing us with safe hunting grounds?”

“That’s right. The denomination and the order have separate hunting areas. This is to avoid unnecessary conflicts. If one of you achieve a clean victory in the duel, we will accept you two as official members of the denomination and allow you two to train in our area. However ...”

Bellon's burning eyes gazed upon on Vulcan and then Dokgo Hoo.

“It is only when it is a clean victory. A wishy-washy draw or defeat will void the entire promise. No. In fact, if you do not achieve a clean victory, you may also earn our fury toward you.”

The aura from Bellon was intense, enough to make even a First-Rate warrior to shiver in fear, but it didn't have any particular impact to Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo.

Watching this, Bellon was actually impressed.

‘These are rookies? Their strengths are unbelievable. Of countless graduates who went through the Act 1, I don't think I have seen these kind of talents ...’

The rate of their growth was so incredible that it made Bellon wonder if The Six were like this in their rookie days.

Before he realized, he was already having thoughts of caution against the two piling up in his mind.

“I understand. The proxy duel ... I will provide you with a certain victory.”

“... Good. Good. As you know, my pride is quite important.”

Having heard Vulcan's answer, Bellon shook off his miscellaneous thoughts. Bellon pretended to have an emotionless face and then stared at Vulcan.

Vulcan made another proposal.

“However, for the sake of a certain victory, there is a favor I would like to ask of you. First, when is the proxy duel?”

“Exactly one month from now. As for the favor, if it is something reasonable, I will give it a good consideration.”

“Archbishop, by chance, do you know about how Players get stronger?”

“Yes I do. I heard that Players accumulate so called “experiences” from slaying monsters. Is that right? It is a very convenient ability. They can improve themselves without any awareness or deep understanding about their techniques. I don't understand how they could be so pathetic when they have an ability like that.

Bellon criticized Players as he clicked his tongue. With beaming eyes, Vulcan said to Bellon,

“That's right. It really is a convenient ability. Of course, the growth that one can achieve through that ability is not the growth in quality. It is just a half-way growth in quantity. Still, when it comes to growth in a short period of time, there is no other ability that comes close to it.”

“Get to the main point.”

“Yes. I’m also a Player, and I have that ability as well. So, if you could show me a little bit of generosity, I could use that ability to reach a new height in a short period of time.”

“Generosity?”

“Yes. Generosity.”

Vulcan nodded and continued right away.

“Just for a month, if you could support me, I will bring you a 100% certain victory.”

---

It was a place where monsters with levels equal to or over 400 roamed around freely.

The north gate field was a wasteland of death crawling with cursed existences such as Hell Goat, Skeleton Knight, and others. Even First-Rate warriors from the Beloong City could not dare to think about entering this place easily.

It was a perilous place where even Zenith-Rate warriors sustained severe injuries for letting their guards down for a moment.

Because of this, the north gate field was famous for always having more monsters than people.

However, for today, a scene different from ordinary days was being produced.

“Surround it with an energy web!”

“There, it’s jumping out!”

“Don’t try to deal damage! Just prevent it from escaping!”

On the field, there were four Zenith-Rate warriors including Dokgo Hoo.

These warriors usually preferred reaching new heights through self-reflection and analysis of techniques instead of desperate battles against monsters, but, for the moment at least, they were showing very different behaviors.

One warrior provoked monsters to lead them to a designated place, and the other three endlessly used magic and martial techniques to ensure the gathered monsters did not scatter or escape.

Finally, Vulcan overlapped multiple Firefields to deal damage to the monsters.

Because it was always Vulcan's magic that dealt the final blow to the monsters, he could safely feast upon all of the experience points by himself.

In other words, it was others that brought the ingredients and cooked them into delicious meals. It was also others that prepared the entire dinner table. Situation was that Vulcan was there just to move his spoon to eat.

‘So this is how it feels like to have someone help you power-level up.’

Vulcan felt great back when he received items sponsorship from Jake, and a sensation no less thrilling than that was surrounding his entire body.

Vulcan sent a telepathic message to Dokgo Hoo.

- Big brother! Since you are here to help, please try harder.
- Shut up you rascal! I'm going to call it quit and tell Bellon I'll enter the proxy duel instead!
- I'm sorry. I will never speak so freely to you again, big brother.
- What kind of bastards are Players anyway. Just how do they get stronger like this? Tsk.

- Anyhow, I am grateful that you are so understanding of my circumstance. This is an incredibly great opportunity for me.

[Your experience points went up.]

[Your experience points went up.]

[Your experience points went up.]

[Level Up!]

Vulcan smiled big because of the rapid level-up speed that was substantially faster than usual.

Vulcan opened his status window and checked his level.

[First-Rate Mage Swordsman Vulcan]

[320Lv]

It only had been three days, but he already gained four levels. The rate was faster than when he was clearing the abandoned dungeon.



‘It’s just too bad that I can do this only for a month.’

Since his safety was guaranteed, he wished he could receive a service like this every time in return for participating in the proxy duels.

However, it was most likely that he would be included in the Golden Ranking’s top 100 after the duel, so it meant he wouldn’t be able to enter proxy duels anymore after that.

Besides, Vulcan figured that working these Zenith-Rate warriors like this again later, when they all had goals of their own, would not be possible.

‘Well, the fact that I will be getting a safe place to hunt is still a great benefit. So, it’s fine. I shouldn’t be so greedy.’

Instead of being disappointed about not being able to do this again, Vulcan decided to be grateful about the fortunate opportunity that came to him. In order to level up as fast as he can, even if it was to get just one more level, Vulcan worked harder to pour in more magic power.

However, there was a man looking at Vulcan with a look of disapproval.

It was Ruwan, the man that could be said as the second in command in the denomination.

With an amused face, Bellon was watching Vulcan's repetitive movements. Ruwan said to Bellon,

“Archbishop, I don't think this is right.”

“What about it exactly?”

“No matter how important the proxy duel is, I wonder if bringing in three of the denomination's Zenith-Rate warriors to support a rookie is an excessive measure.”

“It is not like I forced them to do this. I said anyone who is frustrated from having a warrior's block during the training is welcome to come and relieve some stress, and these came to volunteer. There is no problem.”

“ ... ”

“Also, he is not just an ordinary rookie. He is an elite. He has the potential to leap at an instant and become a Zenith-Rate warrior with a little bit of opportunity. It is not a losing business to provide him with such a generous support.”

Even after hearing the Archbishop's explanation, Ruwan's was not easing his face. Ruwan said right back,

“I'm also worried about our diplomatic relation with the Order. It is a fact that the Order of Virtue has grudge against Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo. If we are to send Vulcan to the proxy duel ...”

“What. Are you concerned that bastard might say he wants to go to war?”

“ ... ”

“Haha. I get that you don’t know Ho-Gyung very well, but you really don’t know him at all.”

Bellon broke in to a big smile.

A lot of people in the Beloong City knew Ho-Gyung as a cold, prideful and fearless man. However, Bellon knew the real Ho-Gyung. He knew what a coward Ho-Gyung really was.

‘Well, although I am the same when it comes to that ...’

This was the reason why something like proxy duels, which wasn’t even funny, was happening.

If there was something that they didn’t like about each other, they could have just put an end to it by either having a duel or a fight to the death, but they growled and barked only on the outside and then avoided each other.

Pride and passion strong enough to toss away one’s life?

They have lost such things a long time ago.

They only made empty threats toward those that were weaker than them.

‘Old and tired, both you and I.’

Bellon and Ho-Gyung are both just two tired old men who could not go to Act 2 because they did not want to lose what they have in their grasps.

Because of this, serious bloody incidents did not occur between the two factions.

Bellon speculated that even this incident will pass as just a minor trouble just like how the balance of power was maintained for several hundred years without major problems.

“Anyway, has Royan been not found still?”

“That’s right. We searched both the north gate and south gate areas, but we couldn’t find anything. It appears ... he must have died while training in a hunting ground.”

“Tsk. We wouldn’t have needed to bring in these runts if he was alive. After all that hard work raising him, he ended up dying before we could even use him.”

“My apologies.”

“It couldn’t be that he was killed by someone?”

“Because it had been only six months since Royan’s magic had a rapid growth, there is hardly anyone that knew about it. So, as for that possibility ...”

“I know. I know, but the timing is just too strange.”

After finishing his sentence, Bellon watched Vulcan’s hunt for a moment and turned around.

“It’s just going to make me bitter inside the more I think about it. I saw enough. Let’s go back.”

“Yes. Archbishop.”

The two disappeared at an instant.

On the other hand, Vulcan didn’t even glance at the two men who were watching. Instead, he only focused on hunting.

# Chapter 37 - Rage

---

The residence of the Order's leader was one of the biggest buildings in the Beloong City.

A middle aged man with his hands over to his back was looking at fishes in the pond. He said,

“Ho-Gwang.”

Ho-Gwang stayed silent.

He didn't look like an unwieldy little son rebelling against his father. His silence was just that he was choking on fear and could not speak.

“Ho-Gwang.”

“... Y ... Yes.”

Ho-Gwang stuttered because he was nervous. Ho-Gyeong, the leader of the Order, said with a dry voice,

“I always thought the world of you ever since we were in the lower dimension.”

“... Yes.”

At least to his son, Ho-Gyeong always had a kind tone of voice, but it was different this time. Ho-Gwang's body shivered. Regardless, Ho-Gyoung continued,

“Back in those days, your so called big brothers were such embarrassments for me. They were born into my bloodline, yet their talents in martial arts were at pathetic levels. Even when they were criticized by others right in front of me, I couldn't say anything back. It was such a shame.”

Actually, back in those days, Ho-Gwang's other brothers did have growth rates not far behind the rates of rising talents in other factions, but that was all they could accomplish.

To Ho-Gyoung's standard, they were ordinary and unacceptable talents.

“On the other hand, you were different. In the lower dimension, there was no body that could even be compared to you. Even when you arrived here, you did not disappoint me. You worked more diligently and harder through excruciating trainings. You grew and reached the Zenith-Rate at a rapid pace. It was enough to make people say you are a prodigy. It was enough that I would have acknowledged you even if you were not my son.”

“...”

“As much as I acknowledged you and cared for you, I did not limit your behaviors. Many said that you are too arrogant or that

you rely on your father's influence too much, but I didn't care about such complaints. It was because you are a Zenith-Rate swordsman. Also, you achieved that title at a young age before even reaching 150. You had the right to be arrogant. I always believed that you would only bring more honor to my name. I have never thought that you would taint it."

Having said as much, Ho-Gyoung kept silent for a moment.

The pressure felt greater than facing animosities from several tens of Zenith-Rate warriors. It was making Ho-Gwang break cold sweat all over the body like rain.

The moment was not even one-minute-long, but for Ho-Gwang, it felt as long as one year.

Ho-Gyoung eventually opened his mouth and spoke.

"This isn't even being defeated in a duel. You got smacked on the back of your head?"

"That ... that is!"

The aura rising from the Order's leader was strong enough to be visible. Ho-Gwang was about to say something, but he could not.

Having seen Ho-Gyoung's enraged face, Ho-Gwang realized there is no excuse that would work in this situation.



Gulp.

Ho-Gwang swallowed a dry gulp. His entire body was shivering like a fragile tree in the wind.

His father was not showing his usual fatherly demeanor. Instead, the man standing before Ho-Gwang was the other side of Ho-Gyoung, the most powerful warrior who has the Beloong City in his grasp.

All Ho-Gwang could do was to make apologetic face and seek forgiveness.

“... Get going.”

“Father.”

“Go. Go to the south mountain and train in isolation for five years. Tell the general assembly to get it prepared and depart right away.”

“... Yes. I understand.”

As Ho-Gyoung watched his son stepping away quietly, he fell in to a deep thought.

‘He suffered a disgrace by a rookie who had been in here for less

than 5 years.'

Part of Ho-Gyoung's face between his eyebrows wrinkled.

Ho-Gwang had an incredible talent. His talent was incomparable to anyone in the Beloong City.

Ho-Gwang reached Zenith-Rate in less than 100 years when Ho-Gyoung took 150 years to get that far. Not counting The Six, nobody would have questioned if Ho-Gwang was to be claimed as the best talent in Beloong City.

Despite his long years of experience in Asgard, and despite having seen all sorts of things throughout those years, Ho-Gyoung still could not believe that Ho-Gwang was defeated by a total newbie that just got his name listed on the Rookie Ranking.

He could only imagine how shocked Ho-Gwang must have been considering that he had not been in Asgard as long.

'So, have they appeared? Graduate candidates...'

These demonstrated feats that even prodigies were not allowed to achieve.

Instead of going up thousands of steps through a hard work over several hundred years, these reached Act 2 in devilish growth rate with a few giant-like leaps.

Once in a long while, these beings, as if they are of different species, appeared in Beloong City. They possessed amazing talents that could not be contained inside Act 1.

For those that were definitely talented enough to leave Act 1, people called them graduate candidates.

Also, looking at what has happened so far, it became apparent that Dokgo Hoo and Vulcan were graduate candidates.

Since Ho-Gwang never had encountered such beings in his life, the situation was just that he was unlucky. Considering the unusual situation, it would be wrong to fault Ho-Gwang for challenging Vulcan since he had no way of knowing the consequence.

Because Ho-Gyoung was aware of this, he didn't scold Ho-Gwang too harshly.

He blew steams out at his son because there was no way to recover from the embarrassment.

‘When it comes to graduate candidates ... handling them faster would be good, but the better way is to not buy grudge from them in the first place ...’

The graduate candidates were not going to be in this place for long anyway.

If Ho-Gyoung tried to kill them because he considered them seeds of threat, and if by a bad luck they gained enlightening in middle of the battle, graduate candidates could turn into invincible beings at an instant, the kind of warrior never seen in Act 1.

To exaggerate a little, these bastards were the kind that could reach a new height by just watching leaves fall.

It was best to forego the thoughts about pestering them and just send them to the next Act.

‘However, we already had a bad incident.’

The Order lost face from the incident. In order to reclaim it, he had to punish the graduate candidates.

However, even with possibilities in one in ten thousand, various possible ways where things could go wrong concerned Ho-Gyoung.

This caused his worries to deepen.

At that moment, a voice could be heard, which woke Ho-Gyoung from his thoughts.

“My lord, it’s Lee Jung-yup.”

“Ah, senior officer.”

Ho-Gyoung nodded and welcomed Lee Jung-yup. Ho-Gyoung asked him in a quiet voice,

“So, is the preparation for the proxy duel going well?”

“Yes. It’s going without any problems.”

“That’s good. At least I won’t have to worry about being humiliated in the duel.”

Looking at Lee Jung-yup made Ho-Gyoung feel he could really depend on the man. Ho-Gyoung smiled faintly.

Even a year ago, Ho-Gyoung had a quarrel with Bellon and had to do a proxy duel. The outcome was an overwhelming victory for the Order of Virtue who sent out Lee Jung-yup as the fighter.

He was not in the Golden Ranking back then only because people were not aware of his ascension to a new height after an enlightenment. Back then, Lee Jung-yup was actually powerful enough to be in top ten of the Golden Ranking.

This time, the Order was planning on sending out a hidden talent as well.

‘Since he is above Ho-Gwang, nobody from outside of the Golden Rankiing would be a match for our fighter.’

Ho-Gyoung was enduring headache until now, but it felt like the pain was subsiding a little.

Satisfied, Ho-Gyoung smiled. Lee Jung-yup said to him,

“I have one more thing to inform you about ...”

“What is it?”

“The ones that the Young Master had an ill incident with ... Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo joined the denomination.”

“Hm ... I got it. You may go.”

“Yes.”

Lee Jung-yup disappeared as if he was never there in the first place. Putting his conversation with Lee Jung-yup behind him, Ho-Gyoung fell into a deep thought.

‘Perhaps that’s actually a good thing ...’

If the Order left Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo alone, people would have started to talk and make mockery of the Order. It was because the move could be viewed as the Order, a large organization, fearing a few individuals.

If he left things be like that for a long time, he would not be able to avoid losing face and letting it plummet to the floor.

However, now that Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo joined the denomination, the situation was different. It was no longer between the Order and two individuals. It was now between two factions.

Therefore, now the situation was fitting enough that people would have understood if the Order took a step back without taking any drastic measures.

‘There shouldn’t be a problem even if I just sent someone later and got a proper apology from them.’

Ho-Gyoung wanted to say no to the idea of getting tangled up with monsters like them and making the problem bigger.

If there was another incident in the future where the Order suffered an even bigger humiliation, then that would be a different story, but for now, Ho-Gyoung was finding it acceptable to look the other way.

Of course, if another incident similar to this was to happen ...

‘Then I don’t care about their potentials or whatever. I will kill them.’

CRACK!

By Ho-Gyoung's powerful aura, a boulder near by crumbled like a cookie.

---

Time went by and the sun rose on the day of the proxy duel.

The duel was between the Holy Denomination of War, those who worshiped Powell, and the Order of Virtue, an alliance of martial artists from Murim.

Because it was a battle between two factions that represented Beloong City, there was a big interest about the duel.

However, there were not that many spectators. It was because the two factions set a limit on who could come to watch. This was out of concern that allowing a bunch of nobodies to come and watch may interfere with the duel.

The limit was Zenith-Rate and above.

Despite the hefty limit, over 300 people came to watch. They were keeping their places in the audience section in anticipation of the duel that was about to unfold soon.

And, the beings that shined brighter than everyone, the Order's Blade King Ho-Gyoung and the Denomination's Archbishop Battle King Bellon, arrived at the scene.



As if everyone had planned it together, as soon as they saw the two men making the entrance, they all fell silent. Over two-thirds of the spectators belonged to the factions, and the others knew better to not ignore their influence, hence it was obvious why everyone became quiet.

In silence, only the sound of wind could be heard occasionally.

The one that broke that silence was Bellon, the Battle King.

“It’s been a while seeing you like this.”

“Indeed. Has it been ... about one year since our senior officer had his victory?”

“Don’t you think you are too old for petty manipulative provocations?”

“Those that are vulnerable for it fall for it even when they are over a thousand years old. I figured you are one of those kinds. Are you not?”

Having heard what Ho-Gyoung said, Bellon laughed with confidence and said,

“Haha. You sure talk big. You seem pretty confident ... By chance, do you have another Lee Jung-yup?”

“Although they may not be up to our senior officer’s height, but I do have many useful talents. The Order provides full support to those with talents.”

‘This bastard, so there was someone he prepared.’

Bellon felt confidence in Ho-Gyoung’s tone of voice. Bellon made a bitter smile.

By the look on Ho-Gyoung’s face, Bellon figured that it probably would not have gone well if he sent out the warrior that he originally intended to send.

‘But ... it is your turn to be surprised this time.’

Having watched Vulcan train for a month, Bellon became certain of his victory. Bellon was certain that nobody, unless if it was someone in top ten of the Golden Ranking, could beat that greenhorn rookie.

Although Bellon never saw Vulcan fighting with all of his might, Bellon could feel that Vulcan was a monster.

‘Vulcan is definitely a graduate candidate who would either go to Act 2 or go back home within ten years. Or perhaps he might ascend to the realm of gods.’

Regardless, Vulcan was going to bring him victory, and with this, Bellon would be able to maintain a good relation with him. Based

on Vulcan's reaction when Bellon promised a safe hunting ground, Bellon was certain of this.

Bellon felt great, so he said to Ho-Gyoung,

“If you are that confident, let's cut the chit-chat and get started, shall we?”

“Really? Fine. I will introduce ours first.”

Ho-Gyoung snapped his finger. From the Order's side, a man wielding a spear slowly walked toward the front.

The proxy duel fighter's eyes were exuding cold aura.

Watching his steady aura, some of the spectators murmured.

“This ... is incredible.”

“Aren't they suppose to choose the fighter from someone outside of the Golden Ranking? It looks like he could be within the lower half of the ranking.”

“I can't be certain, but ... I think it will be difficult for the Denomination. If we had a Player here, we would be able to determine his stats accurately. It's too bad.”

Everyone was speaking highly of the fighter.

Ho-Gyoung was listening to the spectators' reactions quietly. He didn't bother hiding the tip of his lips tilting upward. With a grin, Ho-Gyoung said to Bellon,

"Now, our fighter is waiting. How about you introduce your hidden fighter as well?"

"I was going to anyway."

Bellon smirked right back at him.

Watching Bellon, Ho-Gyoung could feel a sense of uneasiness coming up inside.

'What's this? Why is he so relaxed? Why all this confidence?'

Ho-Gyoung was sure that even Bellon could see how powerful the Order's fighter was.

'Is Bellon putting up a face and pretending to be confident?'

It did not appear to be the case.

Ho-Gyoung have known Bellon for several hundred years. He knew Bellon's face well. He could at least tell if the expression on

Bellon was genuine or not.

‘By chance, the Denomination also had a top-notch warrior that they have been raising in secret? No. If that was the case, they would have sent that fighter during the last year’s proxy duel. Just what is he ...’

Ho-Gyoung the leader of the Order was in deep thoughts. He was troubled by it to the point he was making wrinkles on his forehead. As he agonized over his thoughts, Ho-Gyoung, for a moment, made a face as if he lost his mind when he saw the Denomination’s fighter.

The man had dark hair with a faint expression.

His face looked young, not even close to 30.

He was swinging a blade with lightning sparks surrounding his entire body.

‘Vulcan! The reason you joined the Denomination was ...! Instead of avoiding the Order’s wraith, was it to make mockery out of me?!’

## GRIT

Ho-Gyoung, the Blade King of the Order of Virtue, grinded his teeth hard enough to break them.

## Chapter 38 - Rage (Part 2)

---

Vulcan was stretching and warming up for the duel as he was walking toward the arena, but he turned his head as he felt an intense, deadly aura.

Vulcan could see Ho-Gyeong, the leader of the Order, glaring at him. His eyes looked like flames could come out of them.

As Vulcan watched Ho-Gyeong looking infuriated, Vulcan felt that joining the Denomination was the right choice.

‘If I didn’t do anything about it, looks like I would have been in a violent incident eventually.’

Vulcan couldn’t tell if Ho-Gyeong was like this because of his son or the proxy duel, but it looked like Ho-Gyeong was the type that just could not stand anything that were not to his likings.

Vulcan checked Ho-Gyeong’s level.

[Ultra-Zenith Swordsman Ho-Gyeong the Blade King]

[537Lv]

‘He is also a Ultra-Zenith warrior on par with Bellon.’

Vulcan figured it was obvious since Ho-Gyeong is the number one in the Golden Ranking.

Vulcan quickly turned his head and lowered it. He was trying hard not to let his gaze run into Ho-Gyeong's eyes.

However, Vulcan still could feel burning glare coming from Ho-Gyeong. It felt like the glare could burn a hole through his body.

All of sudden, Vulcan felt annoyed, and the sensation was quickly filling up inside.

In the end, Vulcan was now under Bellon's umbrella, and from now on, Vulcan was planning on leveling up in a hunting ground where his safety was guaranteed.

It was likely that today was going to be the first and the last time Vulcan would run into Ho-Gyeong, the leader of the Order.

Therefore, all Vulcan had to do was to just go through the proxy duel diligently and come down from the arena. However, although everything was coming to satisfactory conclusions, on the side, this situation was just not to Vulcan's liking.

‘Shit. Really, how did it all come to this?’

Definitely, only a month ago, Vulcan was diligently approaching

new heights without any worries. Vulcan also was careful with his mannerism toward others to avoid unnecessary conflicts with others.

Considering all of these, Vulcan felt wronged. It was driving him insane.

“So you are Vulcan. I heard rumors about you.”

To front of Vulcan, who was deep in thoughts, the Order of Virtue’s proxy duel fighter approached.

The fighter was keeping them in check, but his battle spirit and deadly aura could not be hidden. With those mixed together, they provoked Vulcan, who was standing around like a statue. However, Vulcan was not showing any response.

‘Is it because he has guts? Or is he just ignoring me?’

Jin-Gwak of the namless spear, the proxy fighter for the Order, grinded his teeth as he watched this newbie not showing any sign of response from his provocation.

Jin-Gwak was quite surprised when he saw Vulcan came out as the Denomination’s proxy fighter because Vulcan was the number one in the Rookie Ranking and also the talk of the Beloong City.

Jin-Gwak entered the proxy duel with confidence because he believed he was skilled enough to be on lower end of the Golden



Ranking, but he didn't think Vulcan would be the one he will be going up against.

Until now, he was quite certain of his victory, but now, his chance of victory plummeted by a large margin. However, instead, Jin-Gwak was thinking that this was an opportunity for him.

‘Being called the top end of the First-Rate or the entry-level Zenith... I found those to be lacking, so this is good.’

He knew that he wasn't going to be able to raise his fame and status by beating some ordinary level opponent. All he would have gotten out of the duel would've been something in lines of people recognizing that he was the Order's secret weapon, and he fought well.

However, if he defeated Vulcan, the graduate in training and also the number one in the Rookie Ranking, Jin-Gwak would be able to obtain huge fame.

He thought to himself that he should put everything on the line and fight with all of his might. However...

To Vulcan, who didn't seem to care at all about Jin-Gwak, he said,

“Hey. You have an opponent in front of you. How about you quit your useless thoughts?”

“ ... ”

Jin-Gwak directly talked to Vulcan, but there was still no response from him.

With his face completely crumpled, Jin-Gwak was about to say something again, but Vulcan finally opened his mouth.

“This is so annoying.”

“What? Annoying?”

“You are here with intention to kill me, right?”

“ ... ”

“I’ll assume that you are prepared for possibility of the same consequence for yourself.”

As Jin-Gwak was cringing his face in light of unexpected responses from Vulcan, the proxy duel’s judge shouted out loud,

“Start!”

“Hut!”

Jin-Gwak was dumbfounded by Vulcan’s words. Having heard

the judge, Jin-Gwak quickly took a stance and glared at Vulcan.

Vulcan was now showing a completely different side unlike the vacant stare that he was giving until a moment ago.

From the start, Vulcan cast the Superheated Inferno. Flames of Hell rose up from underneath Vulcan's feet.

Jin-Gwak was going to promptly charge at Vulcan before he could make any moves or perform any tricks, but he gasped for air as he faced flame magic attacks flying at him at incredible speeds.

He was thinking about going on the offensive after dodging the lumps of flames coming at his head, stomach and legs. However, that was only his wishful thinking.

**BOOMBOOMBOOM**

**BOBOBOOM**

Against incredible number of magic attacks charging at him at once from all directions he could possibly go, Jin-Gwak chaotically swung around his spear. However, stopping them all was impossible.

Jin-Gwak's spear techniques specialized in piercing the opponent in a single blow, and it required him to take the lead on the battle

and quickly charging toward the opponent. It had an offensive power that he was proud to show off, but on the contrary, when it came to defense, his technique didn't have anything special.

Jin-Gwak always have stabbed the opponents' hearts before they had time to respond. Now that he was facing large number of magic attacks coming at him at incredible speed for the first time, Jin-Gwak was not able to get a grip on the situation.

So, in the end, he used protective energy blades to withstand the Superheated Inferno and other magic attacks he didn't manage to strike down.

Of course, in this state, it was impossible for him to shift into offense.

The battle was one sided with Vulcan dealing all of attacks, and Jin-Gwak essentially became a training dummy.

'No way. This bastard's casting speed... They are powerful as well, but how is he casting so fast?'

The magic attacks were simple. Projectiles, which were burning at high temperatures, were being poured at him, and there was nothing special about them.

However, this was an example where one skill polished to the peak performance was shining more brightly than possessing a few dozen miscellaneous skills.

Vulcan's Hellfire was sharper than magic by other mages specializing in flame element. In fact, it was beyond comparison. Vulcan's magic was gradually pushing Jin-Gwak into his grave.

Also, things targeting Jin-Gwak's life were not just the magic attacks he could track with his eyes.

BOBOOM!

“Kuuurk!”

Explosion, a magic that explodes flames in the nearby area and deals huge damage, showed off its power. It had been a while since Vulcan used this skill.

Using illusion-step technique, Jin-Gwak made a short distance teleport and got past the pinch, but Jin-Gwak felt like his insides were burning from the anxiety.

The entire battlefield was covered in flames from the Superheated Inferno, and the Explosion occurred without any hint or sign. To Jin-Gwak, Vulcan's Explosion technique was like calamities.

The Explosions were like deadly ambush attacks coming at him only when he had gaps in his defense due to being overwhelmed. It was striking fear in him.

Jin-Gwak's face was gradually being saturated with a sense of despair.

‘This is... I have no choice. Even if I have to spend the Life Force... Even if I have to risk death or losing my ability to use energy technique forever... As a last resort...’

He readied himself for the possibilities of permanent injuries or death as he surrounded himself with multiple layers of black energy blades. He eventually surrounded himself with 13 layers of energy blades, making an appearance that looked like a ball.

It was just about when Jin-Gwak was going to activate his Soul-Steal-Flash technique.

He could feel something.

Because he was preoccupied with wrapping himself in energy blades, he failed to notice until now. There was a gigantic fist approaching the top of his head at an unavoidable speed.

There was the Ifrit's Fist, a gigantic fist which was 100 ft in diameter, falling toward Jin-Gwak to destroy him.

‘N O...!’

KABOOM!

The Ifrit's Fist magic was not for fighting a human opponent. Instead, it was meant to be used to squash a super sized monster in a single blow.

It was an extremely mana-inefficient technique that Vulcan could not even think about using until he went past level 300.

Regardless, compensating for its drawback in the mana consumption, Ifrit's Fist was a certain-kill magic that showed off an incredible damage.

Violent sounds of explosions, as if several thousands of dynamites exploded all together, echoed throughout the battlefield.

The spectators quickly activated their magic and martial techniques to protect their ears.

The effect from the collision subsided, and the scene that revealed itself afterwards was shocking enough to be called a result of a natural disaster.

There was a huge crater as if a meteor fell, and the trees nearby were still burning in intense flames with no sign of calming down.

There was no sign of Jin-Gwak.

It was because he was vaporized by the impact from the Ifrit's Fist.

On the other hand, in middle of the burning field, Vulcan was still standing tall.

Due to excessive use of mana, Vulcan's shoulders were moving up and down as he tried to catch breath. Still, he appeared completely clean without a scratch.

Having witnessed the battle, everyone's faces were saturated with shock.

“Against a spear-master of such caliber...”

“Simply using... By overwhelming... He didn't even use his sword! With just his magic...!”

“This... Even if we called him as just below the Blade King or the Battle King...”

“... I know.”

Impressed, people started to express their opinions in words as they woke up from the state of shock. They were expecting that the duel would be a high-class battle between two top-notch warriors, but they ended up witnessing something far more incredible.

A shock similar to the last year, when Lee Jung-Yup made an entrance like a comet, was engulfing them like a tidal wave.



Actually, this was beyond comparison.

In case of Lee Jung-Yup, he reached the top end of the Zenith-Rate at an explosive rate, but to produce that result, it took him 150 years.

To people who are unaware of this fact, it looked like Lee Jung-Yup just grew in power in no time, but actually, he spent very long hard years enduring excruciating training to get to the seventh place in the Golden Ranking.

However, it was different with Vulcan.

It was like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly at an unstoppable speed without going through the process of chrysalis.

It was equal to speeding through the field on a Red Hare horse when others barely finished learning how to walk and were just starting to think about trying out a slow jogging.

“The greatest talent... ever.”

This was the world where the greatest warriors of lower dimensions gathered. Three out of five were considered the undefeated champions of their former worlds, and once in a while, there were some who would be the best in the history of the past and even the future.

Now, in light of the greatest talent that they have ever met,

people couldn't hide their excitement.

“The more I see it... I'm surprised more and more.”

Having witnessed the conclusion of the duel, Bellon applauded with a satisfied smile.

Other members of the Denomination, who were not able to get a hold of their minds from the shock, followed Bellon and started applauding wholeheartedly, and it soon spread to others not associated with the Denomination.

However, the top-notch warriors from the Order of Virtue did not join in the atmosphere.

Actually, they couldn't.

Anyone that saw Ho-Gyeong's face would have had no choice but to be careful. An uncomfortable atmosphere, the kind that was making them feeling uneasy even to just breathe loudly, was chaining them down.

“You have done a good work, Vulcan.”

With an exhilarating smile, Bellon said to Vulcan, who had just returned from achieving a definite victory.

With his mind still convoluted with thoughts, Vulcan lightly

nodded and walked toward where Dokgo Hoo was.

When everyone else was being serious, Dokgo Hoo was looking at Vulcan as he crunched and munched on popcorn.

Vulcan's face completely crumpled.

“Ugh! What a lunatic you are, big bro! I had to go through all that trouble because of you, but you are not being thankful at all!”

“What! You rascal! How dare you talk in such an insolent tone to your big brother!”

“If you didn't act foolish during my duel against Ho-Gwang, my life wouldn't be in the state it is now!”

“What? Just yesterday, you were all excited and happy that you are able to level up fast and went past level 350 already!”

“That was just one silver-lining that came out of all other disastrous incidents!”

“Oh my, looks like we should have that duel that we didn't get to that time.”

Bellon made a quick glance at the two arguing and then redirected his gaze toward Ho-Gyeong.

He was straining his jaw enough to crush his teeth.

Bellon said,

“It appears that, for this duel, the victory belongs to us.”

“ ... ”

“As you promised, we will take the special herbs found in the west gate area. Do you have any objections?”

Ho-Gyeong was glaring at Bellon, but soon he closed his eyes.

Bellon had a big smile on his face, and Ho-Gyeong wanted to tear his mouth apart immediately.

He wanted to go on a full out war right now, break the bones of those bastards from the Denomination and carve their hearts out.

Like how things were in the lower dimensions, he wanted to go back to the time when he was the unstoppable power.

At that moment, voices could be heard from somewhere.

“Oh you crazy old man, how could you be so stubborn?”

“It is not being stubborn! It’s called having a grit! Also, I never

once thought I have done anything wrong!”

“That is not... I was wrong. Just... from now on, can’t you kill your anger just a little and live?”

“Little brother, just what are you so worried about? Now that we are acknowledged by the Denomination, we no longer have to worry about looking over our shoulders.”

“Ugh... Let’s just stop talking about it here.”

Ho-Gyeong’s eyes lit up at an instant.

He glared at the source of the voice. His entire body was shaking out of rage.

‘Vulcan... Dokgo Hoo...!’

“Ho-Gyeong. Do you have any objections? You sure are taking a while to respond.”

Having noticed Ho-Gyeong’s murderous intent, Bellon stared with curious eyes as he asked.

Ho-Gyeong briefly directed his gaze toward Bellon and turned his back immediately.

Following their infuriated leader, the officials from the Order quickly disappeared.

Bellon accepted Ho-Gyeong's silence as the agreement. He smiled big and said,

“Hahaha. We paid back the humiliation from the last year with interest. All right. Let's head back as well!”

With cheers, the people from the Denomination replied to Bellon's words. Meanwhile, standing amongst them, Vulcan made an uneasy face.

‘This is probably the end of all that... This was probably the best.’

It wasn't like there was nothing about this that bothered him, but anyhow, Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo now successfully established themselves inside the Denomination.

As he stole some popcorn from Dokgo Hoo, Vulcan tried best to think positively.

# Chapter 39 - Backstabbing

---

“Kuaaaa!”

Violent roar could be heard from Ho-Gyeong’s residence.

That wasn’t all. Various household objects were rolling all over the place in broken pieces, and even large objects such as boulders and tables got swept into and broke due to the violent aura he exuded.

The lord of the Order of Virtue had his face cringed like a devil, and his outburst of anger continued.

“Ugh. Ugh.”

Ho-Gyeong calmed down a little and tried to take a deep breath. Baek-Un, the one who serves as his adjutant, said carefully,

“... We kept thinking maybe, and maybe, but we never knew that the Denomination would send out Vulcan.”

“...”

“On top of that, his ability is virtually approaching the top end of the Zenith-Rate. Winning may not have been possible for him, but I never thought that Jin-Gwak would lose so easily without being able to put up any fight...”

“Silence. Be quiet.”

Baek-Un tightly closed his mouth. Ho-Gyeong closed his eyes to organize his head which was in a disarray with numerous thoughts.

The first thing he thought about was his desire to kill Vulcan.

‘I want to kill that bastard!’

It was an extreme humiliation that he had not suffered in several hundred years.

He was the strongest in the Beloong City. He had never been so humiliated in public directly like that.

Also, because he always maintained good relations with graduates in trainings that popped up once in a hundred years, he didn’t have bad-blood like this happening in the first place throughout those years.

Because of that, he was even angrier about the situation, and he found Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo even more unforgivable.

He had urge to go immediately and take both of their lives. He wanted to pull out their hearts and break their neck bones.



However, that meant war against the Denomination.

It wasn't going to be some proxy duel for the sake of some petty quarrel or pride. A full scale war could lead to casualties over a thousand.

‘... That is no good.’

He wanted to gather everyone of the members of the Order, collide with the Denomination with all of his might and satisfy his anger, but that was not possible.

He only had a few that were truly loyal to him. Most of the members joined the Order for self-serving reasons or because they succumbed to his influence.

They were mostly bastards who only pretended to follow his orders with intent to receive teachings from Ho-Gyeong. Because most of the members were like that, he wondered if he would be able to keep them in line if he proposed an all out war.

‘Also, The Six wouldn't just sit and watch that either...’

At a basic level, The Six appeared to have no interest in the Belong City residents' businesses, but their hands-off attitude wasn't to the point that they would ignore a war between two factions. It was certain that they would come to prevent it.

All in all, there were so many problems. Ho-Gyeong tried hard to

calm his rage.

“Kuuu...”

Of course, it was not easy.

In the lower dimension, Ho-Gyeong was a top-notch warrior who always acted as he wished. Back then, he never had to care about what others thought.

Bellon was getting on his nerve as it was, and now that he had thunder-monkeys called Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo in to the mix to agitate him, his patience was hitting the bottom of the well.

Once again, terrifying energy flew out from Ho-Gyeong's body and engulfed the objects near by.

Baek-Un wanted to calm him down, but Baek-Un couldn't think of any good ideas that would work besides killing Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo, so he stood there helplessly.

At that moment, Lee Jung-Yup, who was only watching two men without a word like a stone statue of the Buddha, spoke.

“My lord.”

“... Senior Officer Lee.”

Ho-Gyeong calmed down his energy, which was running out of control, and listened to Lee Jung-Yup. With his head tilted down, Lee Jung-Yup continued,

“I know what you truly wish.”

“...”

“They made you suffer humiliations that could never be undone. Without any intention of offering you an apology, they schemed inside the safety of the Denomination, and Vulcan came to the proxy duel and killed Jin-Gwak. All these can only be interpreted as actions with intent to make a fool out of you. If we left this be, your good name will soon fall to the ground, and the strength of the Order could gradually diminish. Given the situation, I believe the right thing to do would be killing both of them.”

Ho-Gyeong turned his body and faced Lee Jung-Yup. Lee Jung-Yup had achieved an incredible growth due to an enlightenment from a few years ago. Even before he reached such heights, Lee Jung-Yup was the one that caught Ho-Gyeong when his tendency for being easily agitated got the best of him. Also, Lee Jung-Yup earned his trust while serving in the Order and carrying out its difficult tasks for over a hundred years.

Lee Jung-Yup wasn't just a top-notch warrior with superb combat potential. He was also brilliant and a quick thinker. Lee Jung-Yup always knew what Ho-Gyeong wanted better than anyone else, and even without specific instructions, he always acted in the best interest of the Order. Lee Jung-Yup was a man that was very capable and a royal member of the Order that served

him.

Considering that Lee Jung-Yup had such a deep understanding of Ho-Gyeong's thoughts, he had no reason to be unaware of the reasons why Ho-Gyeong was so hesitant to act.

“Get to the main point.”

“I'll go to the Battle King myself.”

“What do you mean?”

“I'll negotiate with him so that he won't have objections even if the Order eliminated Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo.”

Ho-Gyeong stared at Lee Jung-Yup in silence. By the rapidly progressing conversation, Baek-Un, who was just standing there with a vacant look on his face, quickly interjected,

“What? If it was that simple, our lord would not be agonizing over this matter in the first place! It is not like the Battle King is a bonehead. Do you really think he will turn his back on them by hearing a few words from you?!”

“It's true that they have become members of the Denomination, but they have not accumulated trust yet. The relationship between them and the Denomination is not solid. All it is that there is no bad-blood between them and the Denomination.”

“Even if that is the...”

“Baek-Un.”

Ho-Gyeong interrupted the adjutant’s words and said to Lee Jung-Yup.

“Senior officer Lee.”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Is there a certain way to make that happen?”

“It is not for certain. The possibility of success is about five to six out of ten... However...”

Lee Jung-Yup paused for a moment. His eyes were beaming.

“At least it probably won’t result in any harm to the Order of Virtue.”

“Hm.”

Ho-Gyeong fell into a deep thought as he tapped the sheath with his fingers.

Baek-Un broke cold sweat in middle of the uncomfortable silence.

For about a minute, the sound of Ho-Gyeong's tapping on the sheath grew louder.

Ho-Gyeong, with a dignified and stern face, gave an order to Lee Jung-Yup.

“Senior officer Lee, go and negotiate with the Battle King Bellon in secret.”

“Yes. I understand.”

On Lee Jung-Yup's lips, who still had his head tilted down, a smile passed by for a moment.

---

“You aren't even interested in leveling up, so why are you insisting on following us here? What for?”

“Huhu. You never know? Just like the south gate field, there might be a hidden quest location on the north gate field. Since you know almost nothing about that kind of things, I'm going to look around carefully to find it.”

“But why do I need to help you find it? It's getting in my way of training.”

“What are you talking about? You just focus on training. As for

protecting me, he will be the one doing that.”

Jake said as he looked at Dokgo Hoo.

In Dokgo Hoo’s hand, there was a large buster sword that Vulcan had not seen until today. He glanced at it with the SYSTEM and learned that it was a 450 level grand sword.

Dokgo Hoo was smiling so big that the tip of his lips was hanging on his ears. Noticing this, Vulcan said to Jake,

“We are in Asgard, yet, to think the Materialism still works...”

Jake giggled. He tapped on Vulcan’s back and said,

“You never know. If I do find a hidden quest area, isn’t that also a good thing for you? I’m getting in your way a little, but please understand.”

“Well, okay.”

With the proxy duel concluded, as promised by the Holy Denomination of War, Vulcan was able to hunt freely in the hunting ground that was under Denomination’s control.

Dokgo Hoo didn’t tag along to the hunting ground. He claimed that dueling against Murim warriors is a more fitting training for him than beating up monsters.

Vulcan thought it was not becoming of a mountain bandit that looked like a simpleton brute, but he roughly accepted his answer and had been going on hunting by himself.

When Vulcan had been like that for a while, Jake came with a favor to ask. It was about asking the Denomination to allow him to explore the Denomination's hunting ground.

Jake was a Third-Rate who's level wasn't even above 200, and he hardly had any useful skills related to combat, but Jake had something else that was his specialty.

When it came to skills such as searching, gathering and discovering, the type that were not related to combat, Jake had amazing masteries.

There were a few occasions where Jake went to explore the south gate field's mountain by hiring someone, and the occasions were to use these skills.

Now, with Vulcan's help, Jake was going to enter and explore the north gate field that was under control of the Denomination, which was difficult to enter under normal circumstances.

“But, I'm not all that close to the Archbishop of the Denomination. Don't you know?”

“Huhu. I know that, but, if it is not too difficult, Bellon will try to



be on your good side.”

“Why would that man try to be like that? Looks like he intends to work me on something else.”

“That’s right. Well, with the proxy duel done and over with, the trade standing between you and Bellon are now even, so it is up to you to accept or decline his request, but anyway, Bellon has no intention of turning his back on you, so he will accept a simple favor like this.”

“If you discover a hidden quest, you have to tell me right away.”

“Of course.”

“What’s that? What’s a hidden quest?”

“It’s a matter that doesn’t really have much to do with you.”

Since then, the three walked as they talked about unimportant matters. They eventually reached the entrance to the Denomination’s building where the Battle King Bellon was. They informed the Denomination of their visit, waited for a moment, and soon, they went to stand before Bellon.

“So, is the leveling up going well?”

“Yes. It’s safe there. I’m satisfied with how the hunting is going.

Thank you.”

“Asking someone about how their life is going isn’t becoming of my personality. All these pleasantries are quite awkward. Why don’t you just get to the main point?”

Having heard Bellon’s words, Vulcan smiled. Unlike in the past, Bellon was talking to Vulcan in a tone with somewhat of respect.

‘As Mr. Jake said, it looks like he wants to maintain a good relationship with me.’

As Vulcan introduced Jake to Bellon, he even thought about asking Bellon for help on another mass hunting like during his training for the proxy duel when he sees a good opportunity.

Of course, Bellon knew Jake. Jake explained his objective to Bellon with far smoother eloquence than Vulcan, and Bellon accepted the request without any reservation.

“All right. It’s not like we will be spending or breaking something in the process. Even if you searched the place, I’m afraid you won’t find anything. Our members of the Denomination had been in and out of that place countless times, but we have not found anything other than monsters there.”

“Thank you for caring about us. I’m exploring just because of my curiosity as a merchant.”

“Hm... In that case, it’s fine.”

Jake exchanged a look with Vulcan as he peeked a smile.

The people of the Denomination had good eyes, but it was not like they specialized in search and excavation like Jake who possessed skills specific to those tasks.

Vulcan was thinking about perhaps he should feign ignorance to everyone else if Jake found anything during his search. While Vulcan was deep in thought, he noticed someone rushing in.

It looked like he had something important, however, because Vulcan’s party was still half a stranger to the Denomination, it seemed the man was hesitant to speak with them present.

“We will take our leave now.”

Because Vulcan got everything he wanted, he quickly left. Bellon made some hand gestures to see them off.

While they were leaving the Denomination, the look on Jake’s face was not looking good. Looking at Jake who appeared to be thinking very hard about something, Dokgo Hoo asked,

“Why are you making a face as if you just chewed on a piece of shit?”

“I was just... thinking about what happened a moment ago. What could have happened that this man had to rush to Bellon to inform him about?”

Jake tilted his head to the side as he continued,

“The proxy duel is over, and there isn’t anything that could cause further incidents. Just what could it be about...”

“Well, he is the leader of a faction, so they must have a lot of matters that we don’t know about.”

“It’s not like he is the king of a country. At the most, this city only has about twenty thousand people. What could possibly have happened in a city like this? Even if it is something big, it’s probably about the Order of Virtue...”

As Jake continued to agonize over his thoughts, Dokgo Hoo, frustrated, put Jake on his shoulders.

“Ah, hey! You! Just what are you doing...!”

“Little brother! I’m tired of hearing about this, so why don’t we just get there fast!”

Vulcan shook his head as he watched Dokgo Hoo running far ahead.

---

Around the same time, to inside of the Holy Temple where Bellon

was, strangers came to visit.

There was Lee Jung-Yup, a Murim warrior carrying two curved swords which were making an impression, and Miluwall, one of commanders from the Players Alliance.

Looking at Lee Jung-Yup, who was standing tall in silence, and Miluwall, who was a nerve-wreck, Bellon cringed as he looked at them one after the other.

‘They don’t have any particular reason to come here.’

Bellon skipped the formalities and pleasantries and asked toward Lee Jung-Yup.

“So, what kind of message does a high ranking officer from the Order had to deliver? You even brought someone?”

With an expressionless face, Lee Jung-Yup looked at Bellon and said,

“I’ll get to the main point. The Order of Virtue will eliminate Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo.”

## Chapter 40 - Backstabbing (Part 2)

---

“ ... ”

“Battle King, we would appreciate it if you could please look the other way this time when the Order of Virtue makes the move.”

“You are insane.”

The look on Bellon’s face was beyond the point of simply being displeased. Infuriated, Bellon said to Lee Jung-Yup,

“This is not even worth having a conversation on. Get out of my sight. I’ll go and see Ho-Gyeong myself to express my complaint about your ridiculous proposal.”

Although Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo have not become true brethrens of the Denomination, still, officially, they were members of the Denomination to the full extent.

Saying he should sit and watch when the Order kills Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo was equal to patronizing Bellon the archbishop and the Denomination itself.

It was a ridiculous proposal to the point that it made Bellon wonder if Ho-Gyeong finally lost it from his rage.

Bellon had no reason to attentively listen to such proposal from

the Order.

Bellon raised his fist with intent to forcibly toss Lee Jung-Yup out of the temple.

At that moment, calmly, Lee Jung-Yup opened his mouth.

“Vulcan had no intention of leaving Beloong City.”

“...!”

Bellon was shocked to the point that even his fierce intensity dissipated. Bellon asked,

“What did you just say?”

“The Order of Virtue is thinking that Vulcan has no intention of leaving Act 1.”

“... Bullcrap!”

Bellon was denying Lee Jung-Yup’s words, but the fact that he was now listening meant a new seed of doubt had been planted and had sprouted in Bellon. Lee Jung-Yup made a sigh of relief inside and belittled Bellon.

‘What a bunch of spineless cowards.’

“This is not a baseless theory. We have seen many others who cleared Act 1 and left for Act 2 or the realm of gods. However, there is a big difference between those people and Vulcan. Unlike Vulcan, they have not attempted to raise their influence in the Beloong City.”

“You sure know how to bark out such blatant lies with a straight face. When are you saying Vulcan tried to do such things?”

“As soon as he completed his training under Filder, he brought the Players Alliance to their knees, and he obtained full support from Jake. Also, he had been making acquaintances and deepening his friendship with Zenith-Rate warriors like Horuine and Ser-Whee who do not belong to any factions.”

Lee Jung-Yup quickly poured out more explanations. Listening to his words, Bellon cast his doubts.

“What? Wait. What do you mean Vulcan brought Players Alliance to their knees?”

“It is as I said. The members of the Players Alliance are already forces under his command.”

“What a ridiculous idea! From what I learned about the incident, it was Uruo that picked a fight against Vulcan.”

“That is true. However, in the end, he went under Vulcan’s wings



as his subordinate. This is also the reason why Vulcan still didn't kill anyone that attacked him during that incident.”

Lee Jung-Yup paused for a moment and continued,

“Vulcan plans to create a third faction based on Players.”

“...!”

The expression on Bellon's face hardened.

Lee Jung-Yup continued his explanation.

“It is unknown why exactly Vulcan wants to remain in this place. It could be because he has an ambition about having power over strong warriors gathered here from the lower dimensions, or it could be for the sake of other Players like himself. The important thing is the fact that Vulcan's actions are definitely not something that those who intend to go to Act 2 or go back to his own world would do.”

“... Let me think about this for a moment.”

With his hand gestures, Bellon told Lee Jung-Yup and Miluwall to take a step back. Bellon tightly closed his eyes.

He wasn't thinking hard about why Vulcan would want to remain in this place. It was because the reason was obvious to

Bellon.

‘He has no confidence about going over to Act 2, and it is probably hurting his pride to think about going back to his lower dimension.’

Bellon thought about how things went from the moment he arrived in the Beloong City and how he got to where he was now.

Before he came to Asgard, he felt invincible and unmatched under the sky, but when he arrived at Asgard, so many top-notch warriors appeared in front of him. Even Bellon was in despair just like others.

Fortunately, because he was born with brilliant talent, enough to be called a prodigy among all prodigy, he was able to become stronger at an incredible rate, and he was able to eventually reach the second place in the Golden Ranking.

Through out the span of several hundred years, Bellon have witnessed many prodigies being blocked by and giving up from despair after seeing other geniuses who were far superior. Countless times, Bellon have seen them becoming ordinary and pathetic.

It was a mistake to think Asgard would be different from lower dimensions because only the strongest of the lower dimensions are gathered here.

Third-Rate, Second-Rate, First-Rate, Zenith-Rate, and the one at the top of the pyramid, the Ultra-Zenith-Rate...

Even though this place had only the super humans gathered here, just like in lower dimensions, status and class based on abilities were created naturally. The super humans from the lower dimensions, who use to be full of confidence and pride, eventually found their places in the Beloong City befitting of their abilities and acted accordingly.

Having watched the whole thing at work for so long, Bellon had never even thought about going over to the Act 2.

In the Beloong City, he was a man possessing brilliant talent.

‘However, in Act 2, or in the realm of gods... In Act 2, I would be treated like the Third-Rate here.’

Having witnessed several tens of thousands of prodigies falling into despair and giving up, there was a distinct fear that overcame Bellon as he thought about the possibilities should he go over to upper dimensions.

The fear, that even his brilliant talent could become less than ordinary in the upper dimensions, was chaining him down.

Even so, he was not liking the idea of going back to his lower dimension. It was because that would be like completely acknowledging that he was a coward shivering in fear.

Of course, there was also the fact that he will have to give up his eternal life if he leaves this world. That became a huge part of the reasons why he was hesitant to leave this world.

Because of his fear toward the upper dimensions, and because of his sense of defeat about going back to his lower dimension, Bellon was an existence that became a resident ghost of the Beloong city.

This was the Battle King Bellon's true self.

Like that, from a safe place called the top of the Beloong City, he spent his days enjoying watching newly arrived geniuses getting destroyed and falling into despair.

Although Ho-Gyeong, who created the Order of Virtue around the same time Bellon created his Denomination, worried Bellon a little, because he was certain that Ho-Gyeong was also just another coward like himself, the two factions were able to co-exist without serious collisions.

‘However, in this delicate balance of power, what if a new figure named Vulcan entered the scene? Currently, he is definitely not as powerful as me, but what if he uses his devilish talent and climb up above me? What if he turns me into just another one of top-notch warriors in this place, which isn't even Act 2, but Act 1?’

“Um...”

Bellon growled.

Figuring out the probability of Vulcan choosing to establish himself in the Beloong City was no longer important. The important thing was the fact that there was a possibility, even if it was a small one.

Bellon had to be the top in this world, and anyone that threatened his position could not be forgiven.

Also, the only opportunity to eliminate that threat was when an incredible prodigy called Vulcan was not yet fully matured, which was right now.

Bellon brought in Lee Jung-Yup again and asked,

“You probably didn’t come here with just your conjectures. Do you have any proof or witness?”

Although that’s how he put it, Bellon was going to accept Lee Jung-Yup’s proposal even if he brought forth the silliest excuse.

To Bellon, logic or definite evidence was no longer important.

There was a seed of anxiety that was planted deep in his heart, and now it had sprouted. As long as he could be given an excuse to eliminate Vulcan, it didn’t matter to him how shabby the excuse was.

Lee Jung-Yup, as he smiled for the first time since he entered the temple, introduced Milwall to Bellon.

“This man is one of the commanders in the Players Alliance and also a witness.”

Bellon listened to testimonial that Milwall gave as Milwall shook uncontrollably from fear. Having finished with listening to what Milwall had to say, Bellon said to Lee Jung-Yup,

“The Denomination will not interfere with the Order’s actions.”

---

BOOM!

A Hellgoat, a monster with a human body with a goat’s head, stroke down its halberd in a big swing. It created a crack on the ground over 100 feet in length. Watching it gave Vulcan goosebumps.

‘This is like a walking natural disaster.’

It was on brink of death, yet it was still demonstrating such power. Vulcan’s face was saying he could not believe what he was seeing. With that expression in his face, Vulcan aimed for the gap in the Hellgoat’s defense.

Because the Hellgoat was already severely injured from magic attacks, it was not able to respond properly to Vulcan’s attacks. Its

head that flew off from its body was rolling on the ground, and its death turned in to Vulcan's experience points.

[Your Experience Points Went Up.]

[Level Up!]

“Wow, it's difficult to have just two of them coming at me at once.”

Vulcan wiped off the sweat as he gathered the items and looked toward Dokgo Hoo.

“Your little brother was in danger, so why were you just watching?”

“What are you talking about? What were you going to do if I left Jake's side to come over there and another monster came to Jake?”

Dokgo Hoo, who was standing next to Jake, objected.

Vulcan was at a loss for words. He made a click noise with his mouth and turned his head.

‘This place definitely has more monsters than other places in the north gate field. Looks like I'll have to be careful.’

Because Hellgoats were powerful, they usually roamed around alone. However, in this place that the Denomination introduced to Vulcan, there were sometimes in groups of two or even three. The area had that high of concentration of monsters.

It was perfect for hunting large number of monsters, but if there were three or more Hellgoats, even Vulcan could be in danger of getting injured, so he was not letting his guard down.

‘Mr. Jake came along to a place like this. Does he not have any sense of fear...’

Sometimes, Vulcan felt Jake was gutsy as if he did not have any attachment toward the value of his own life. Even now, Jake didn’t care whether or not battles were happening nearby. He only observed a tree.

‘Is it because he lived too long or is it just his personality?’

To Vulcan, who was not even in his thirties, it was difficult to understand or figure out how Jake thought of his own life. Vulcan extended his arms wide and did a big stretch. It was just about when he was going to walk toward where Jake and Dokgo Hoo were.

“...!”

“This is!”



Vulcan quickly joined Dokgo Hoo and Jake and looked toward somewhere.

“There are people approaching us.”

“I know. Shit. It doesn’t look like they are from the Denomination.”

Having spewed out curse word, Dokgo Hoo drew his sword. Vulcan also made all sorts of preparations to be ready for the dangerous situation that could ensue soon, and then he carefully examined the men approaching this way from the distance.

The first thing that he noticed was their getup, which was Murim style clothing.

As for their number, there were eight of them.

Vulcan used the SYSTEM and scanned them. He wondered if it would be possible because of the long distance, but fortunately, there were things floating in front of him.

[Zenith-Rate Swordsman Jang-Ho]

[481Lv]

[Zenith-Rate Swordsman Hwang Bo-Huk]

[479Lv]

...

[Zenith-Rate Swordsman Lee Jung-Yup]

[493Lv]

‘Lee Jung-Yup! They are from the Order of Virtue!’

Vulcan ground his teeth.

The first thing that came to his mind was, ‘why.’

Unless the Order intended to have a full out war against the Denomination, they would not be coming to attack him.

However, as Vulcan thought about it some more, it was also implausible that the men from the Order managed to infiltrate this deep in to the hunting site controlled by the Denomination. That was not all.

The men approaching had no sign of struggle along the way here. They all had completely clean clothes and faces.

‘That means... Bellon, that son of bitch...!’

An uncontrollable rage surrounded Vulcan’s entire body.

It was not anger toward Bellon. It was anger toward himself.

‘I put too much faith in thinking Bellon and Ho-Gyeong were not getting along. I’ve been acting with my guard down!’

Since the beginning of all these troubles, all this time, Vulcan had been dealing with things with the idea of going along with the flow, but in the end, to see that this was the result, feeling of regrets were refusing to leave Vulcan’s mind. He kept thinking he should have been more proactive.

Unlike Vulcan, who’s head was in a state of complete disarray, Dokgo Hoo had no thoughts in his head.

There were eight opponents who were around his level in combat potentials.

The difference in number was tough. Even if he focused in the combat, it was going to be difficult just to survive.

# WOOOONG

From Dokgo Hoo's gigantic buster sword, energy blade over 60 feet in length came out. Not satisfied with it, Dokgo Hoo focused his mind further.

As he focused his energy, the energy blade that extended out gradually compressed and became about seven feet long.

It was beyond comparison to ordinary energy blades. It now possessed incredible amount of energy compression and destructive power.

'I'm going to strike them down the moment they get here!'

Facing eight Murim warriors that approached up to right in front of him, Dokgo Hoo finished getting ready to charge forward.

However, there were people that started attacking even before Dokgo Hoo.

Lee Jung-Yup and Jang-Ho, the two warriors who were on the rear end of the group, ambushed and killed two of the men who were approaching Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo.

"What...!? Are you insane?! Senior officer Lee!!"

“Just what are you doing?”

There were two corpses, one with the head chopped off, and the other with the head exploded. The men from the Order of Virtue shouted in shock.

Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo were not able to get a grip on their minds either. Not just Vulcan, but also Dokgo Hoo, who were just about to charge in and unleash his Tiger King blade technique, were both standing still with vacant looks on their faces.

Lee Jung-Yup shouted,

“Now it is four against four! We need to end this quickly and get out of this place!”

Dokgo Hoo instinctively charged in.

Watching the scene turning into a chaos, Vulcan crumpled the gap between his eyebrows.

‘Right. It is not going to be too late to think hard about this later.’

Surrounding his body with flames and lightning, Vulcan charged forward into the battlefield.

Inside the chaos, a battle of bloody carnage started.

# Chapter 41 - Backstabbing (Part 3)

---

Unlike the initial expectation that this was going to be a tough fight, the battle ended too quickly. It was anti-climatic.

Lee Jung-Yup and Jang Ho, the two of the warriors from the Order betrayed their own group. The battle ended not with a bang but with a whimper because the warriors from the Order panicked and were not able to show off their real skills.

Also, with the playing field evened by Lee Jung-Yup and Jang Ho's betrayal, there was a slight difference in overall combat potentials between the two sides. With the overwhelming advantage in number now gone, the Order's warriors no longer had any hope of survival.

“Lee Jung-Yup, you bastard!”

Lee Jung-Yup cut down the head of the last warrior who was defiant to the end. Lee Jung-Yup now looked at Vulcan.

Vulcan too faced Lee Jung-Yup with a hardened face. Vulcan was still not letting his guard down against Lee Jung-Yup.

“Just what are you scheming?”

“It would not feel right to explain it here. First, why don't we go somewhere else?”

Lee Jung-Yup used his energy technique and erased all dead bodies and gave Jang Ho a signal with his gaze. Looking Lee Jung-Yup and Jang Ho starting to move immediately, Dokgo Hoo asked,

“What are you going to do?”

“... For now, let's follow them.”

“I also would like to do that. This place is no longer safe.”

Dokgo Hoo put Jake on his shoulders as soon as Jake finished his words. Looking at Dokgo Hoo quickly following Lee Jung-Yup, Vulcan also activated his spirit form.

‘It doesn't look like he is taking this easy. Well, actually, he takes everything very seriously all the time, doesn't he?’

After several hours of traveling, the group finally reached the destination.

It was an empty place with almost no monsters or people, but when Lee Jung-Yup pushed a boulder away, an underground pathway, where a person could barely go through, revealed itself.

“Let's talk after we go in.”

As Vulcan watched Lee Jung-Yup and Jang Ho go right into the pathway, he cast a Hellfire. Using the light from the Hellfire,

Vulcan thoroughly examined the pathway for dangers. Afterwards, still with his guard up, he carefully entered the pathway.

Once he entered inside, an empty space appeared. Besides a few unidentified bag sacks and boxes, there was nothing in the room.

Lee Jung-Yup started to talk.

“This place is not known to anyone, so we will be able to have a calm conversation here.”

“Calm? Cut the bullcrap and just start with the main point.”

Lee Jung-Yup shook his head as he watched Dokgo Hoo growl.

“I’m several hundred years older than you two, yet you guys are not showing any sign of respect.”

“Stop playing around with words. I have many questions, but I’ll ask this one first.”

Having heard Vulcan, Lee Jung-Yup nodded.

“Ask.”

“Both the Denomination and the Order, did they decide to make enemies out of us?”



“That’s right. In exchange for a compensation, Bellon agreed to ignore the Order’s attempt at your life.”

“With what you have done, it would be the same as you and this... Jang Ho betraying the Order.”

“That’s also correct.”

“No matter how I think about it, I’m not getting this. There probably isn’t any benefit you could reap from siding with me and Dokgo Hoo.”

With his facial expression hardened, Vulcan asked seriously,

“So why? Do you have a reason to help us?”

Vulcan didn’t like Lee Jung-Yup. Of course, he didn’t trust him either.

Lee Jung-Yup was always acting and doing things as he pleased. Also, he was known to people for his whimsical character. Vulcan didn’t like any of that about Lee Jung-Yup. Also, the first impression that Lee Jung-Yup made during the fight against the Players Alliance wasn’t all that great to begin with.

So, in summary, Vulcan had a strong impression about Lee Jung-Yup as a bastard who could not be trusted.

Because of this, what Vulcan was going to do about Lee Jung-Yup depended on the trustworthiness of what he was about to say.

‘I also have to think about the possibility of a fight breaking out here.’

Lee Jung-Yup wiped off the usual mellow expression from his face and looked at Vulcan. With a serious face, Lee Jung-Yup said to Vulcan,

“I plan to kill the lord of the Order of Virtue.”

“...!”

“And I think the most suitable card for that is you.”

As if Vulcan never thought he would be hearing something like that from Lee Jung-Yup, Vulcan’s face was getting saturated with a shock.

Jake was surprised just the same. However, he soon started to murmur as if it made sense to him,

“Is that so? In that case, that explains the reason why they are helping you guys.”

“That explains it?”

“Can you imagine how many grudges Ho-Gyeong must have bought over the past several hundred years? Even recently, occasionally, there were assassination attempts or challenges for a duel to the death. The problem was that they were like trying to shatter a boulder with eggs.”

“That guy is a senior officer in the Order. Someone like him doesn’t have a reason to betray the Order, don’t you think?”

“I don’t know about something like that.”

With his face completely crumpled, Vulcan tossed a question to Jake,

“Let’s just assume for now that he does want to kill the Order’s lord. Still, don’t you think this doesn’t make any sense? He has no reason to go so far as taking on such a risk just to help us.”

“It doesn’t make sense to you? Why not? If you think about it in the long term perspective, you and Dokgo Hoo are only warriors with the potential to rise above Ho-Gyeong.”

“You think that’s all it’s going to take? Even if I went past level 550, I can’t fight all of the Order.”

Lee Jung-Yup interjected,

“Do you remember what I said before? Murim is about the pride of being the strongest. If someone challenges for a duel to settle a grudge, Ho-Gyeong cannot bring his entire organization. If you shout out your challenge in front of everyone in the Plaza, he will have no choice but to accept it.”

After looking at Lee Jung-Yup who interjected, still not convinced, Vulcan objected,

“Since I’m the one getting help from you, I shouldn’t be the one to criticize, but your plan has too many holes all over. First of all, I find it laughable that you think I’ll most certainly want to kill the Order of Virtue’s lord.”

“Why is it laughable? You and the Order have gone to the point where co-existence is no longer possible. Even the Denomination ignored the Order’s attempt at your life. For you, in order to go past Act 1 safely, the only way is killing the Order of Virtue’s lord.”

“Fine. Let’s assume that’s the case, but your plan is still too weak. To start with, I find it strange that you are going about this by counting 100% on me and Dokgo Hoo. Also, it’s not like I’m stronger than Ho-Gyeong at the moment. What you are doing now is no different from someone betting all of your life savings to two lottery tickets and hoping for a big score.”

“...”

“If I were you, I would have either tried to side with Bellon and work hard to fight the Order, or, if even that’s too hard, I would

have just waited until a more certain opportunity came.”

“If I did, you would have been dead by now.”

“What I’m saying is, I cannot trust you.”

“It doesn’t matter if you can or cannot trust me. I’m greatly satisfied with just the fact that you and Ho-Gyeong are enemies. Also, I was certain about you two for a long time.”

Lee Jung-Yup continued as he pointed at Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo,

“You two are not the type of people who would stay in Act 1. In 10 years, and especially you, Vulcan, in five years, you will grow stronger to the point that you will be able to squash Ho-Gyeong and Bellon. It’s something I cannot do.”

What Lee Jung-Yup just said was an utterance with his pride as a Murim warrior thrown away. Lee Jung-Yup continued as he faced Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo who stared at him with uncomfortable faces,

“You probably don’t know things very well because it has not even been a year since you came out of the training under Filder, but killing Ho-Gyeong by stirring up a war between the factions is simply impossible. Both Bellon and Ho-Gyeong are the type of people who have absolutely no intention of fighting. So, in the end, besides challenging him for a duel, there is no other answer.”

“ ... ”

“For this reason, I trained with everything I had. I trained diligently to the point of almost never letting go of my sword, and I was able to get this far with luck.”

Having said this far, Lee Jung-Yup made a self-conscious smile.

“However, this is the end of my limit. Instead of standing around in front of a wall that I can’t break no matter how many times I beat on it, it occurred to me that it would be far better to invest on you two who are like lotteries with very high likelihood of big scores.”

“It seems like you have more faith in me than I do.”

“I have struggled to live in Act 1 for several hundred years. I can at least tell if someone is going to become just an ordinary resident of the Act 1 or talented enough to break the hardened balance of this place and even make it big in the Act 2.”

“ ... ”

“I think it is a blessing that there are bad bloods between you two and the Order. All people that have grudges against Ho-Gyeong, including myself, are betting everything they have on you and Dokgo Hoo.”

Vulcan looked around.

There was Dokgo Hoo with a generally dissatisfied expression on his face that said he is not liking the situation, Jang Ho who just listened to Lee Jung-Yup's words without any change in emotions, and finally Jake who looked like he was being empathetic toward Lee Jung-Yup's words.

Noticing Vulcan's gaze, Jake added,

“To some extent, I can understand what Lee Jung-Yup's saying. It makes some sense to me.”

“... Um.”

“It had been just over three years since you two came to Beloong City, so you guys probably don't know very well. I can say without any reservation that it is impossible to strike down Bellon or Ho-Gyeong by a normal method. The only possibility is borrowing the abnormal talents of people like you guys, the graduates in training, which may or may not happen in a hundred years... However, up until now, such people have never been in bad terms with the factions.”

“Are you saying none of the graduates in training had any troubles?”

“At least they were nothing unbearable like smacking the back of Ho-Gwang.”

After a sigh, Vulcan brought his hand toward his forehead and fell in to a deep thought.

‘Ho-Gyeong, you son of bitch. Bellon, you dirty bastard.’

In his mind, Vulcan was ripping them apart into million pieces.

As for Dokgo Hoo, just thinking about such was not going to be the end. He endlessly poured out swears and curses that one could possibly load on the mouth. Even Jang Ho, who was keeping his undisturbed composure until now, was cringing his face from all the swearing.

Vulcan said to Lee Jung-Yup,

“... So, now that you helped us, you are not planning on making this as the last time, right?”

“Of course not. In this situation, I’m on the same boat as you guys. I promise to actively provide you with support.”

“I’ll ask for three things. First, provide me with a safe hunting ground so I can stay hidden from Ho-Gyeong and Bellon.”

“As for that, I already have prepared a place. I am confident that it is a perfect place for you, a Player.”

“Second, make the political environment into such that Ho-



Gyeong cannot avoid the duel to the death.”

“You don’t know warriors from Murim do you? In this situation, if he was going to refuse the duel to the death, he would probably kill himself first.”

“Also, I’ll need both of your martial arts sealed.”

Lee Jung-Yup and Jang-Ho’s faces hardened.

As for Vulcan, noticing their faces, Vulcan’s mood improved substantially.

Until now, Vulcan was not liking Lee Jung-Yup for always looking leisurely and being full of confidence. Getting to see him panic made Vulcan’s inside feel refreshed.

“It looks like you don’t trust me?”

“Of course I don’t. After everything that has happened, now I really can’t trust anyone in Beloong City. Anyway, if your plan is to rely entirely on me or Dokgo Hoo from now on, you probably won’t be needing your powers. Big brother, you can seal their martial arts by pressure point suppression technique, right?”

“Of course. I’m going to say no to being backstabbed by bastards I don’t even know.”

Looking at Dokgo Hoo, who looked like he could get up and seal their arts immediately, Lee Jung-Yup cringed. However, he regained composure and accepted Vulcan's proposal.

"Fine. Do as you wish."

"... I didn't think you would accept it so willingly."

"Think of it as an expression of our will and intent, that we are putting everything we have on you two. Once we provide you two with the training ground, it would be true that neither of us have any use for our martial arts. However..."

With strength in his eyes, Lee Jung-Yup added,

"This is a gamble where I'm also risking my own life. I hope you will do your absolute best in order to reach new heights so you would be certain to end Ho-Gyeong."

"... I will."

Looking at Lee Jung-Yup's determined face, Vulcan answered.

---

The hunting round that Lee Jung-Yup spoke of was just below the basement. Once they cleaned up the bag sacks, there was a staircase leading below.

When they walked for about a minute, above an altar made of bones, there was a red portal wavering that looked similar to what

Vulcan have seen before.

As if they were trying to insist that the place is not dangerous, Lee Jung-Yup and Jang-Ho, who had their martial arts sealed through the pressure point suppression, went in first. Following them, Vulcan and the rest entered the portal.

There was a message that came up.

[A Quest Generated!]

[Hidden Quest – Defeat Muruolla the Death Knight, the Boss Monster of the Cursed Underground Graveyard]

[Difficulty – C+ (Asgard Standard)]

[Reward – Select one from Skill or Item]

Single-handedly Defeat Muruolla the Death Knight, the ruler of the cursed underground graveyard hidden in the Beloong City's north gate field.

\*Level Limit for the Boss's Room – 450Lv (490Lv Recommended)

\*If you get swept in and overwhelmed by their highly skilled swordsmanship, you could end up only defending against their attacks until you lose your life.

Vulcan and Jake exchanged gazes.

It was a hidden quest!

Since there was a special place in the south gate field, it was not odd for there to be one in the north gate field as well, but they felt surreal now that they received the hidden quest in a situation they never anticipated.

“You guys are acting more surprised than I expected when you guys don’t even know what kind of place this is?”

Lee Jung-Yup, who didn’t know that Vulcan and Jake already received information through the quest notification, started to explain,

“Once you open that door made of bones and enter, monsters that Players would go crazy for will appear. Their abilities are perhaps around middle of the Zenith-Rate? There will be more of them as you go deeper into the place, so you will like it here. As for food... they are in the bag sacks and crates above, so don’t worry.”

“Ptt. I hate stupid monsters.”

“Do you want to have a duel instead? In that case, you will be able to have it if you release this pressure point suppression.”

Acting like he didn't even hear what Lee Jung-Yup said, Dokgo Hoo turned his body away. Looking at Vulcan, Dokgo Hoo said,

“Little brother, for now, you take the inside for yourself. As for me, I'll just train by meditation in the mean time.”

“Fine. It sure looks comfortable. Martial artists can train even if they just have a room.”

“What did you say you rascal? If I have a rotten luck, I'll be training hard for nothing for 10 or 20 years! You are the bastard with a cheat-like ability called the SYSTEM, yet you dare to say such things?!”

“Ugh. At least you two have something to do. How did I get swept up in all this and end up trapped here...”

“... How about having a conversation with that man over there named Jang-Ho?”

After a bit of commotion subsided, Vulcan stood in front of the gate made of bones and took a deep breath.

‘It would be nice if there will be things I could gain from just like that time with the Cheetahmen's hidden quest place.’

Simply leveling up was not the important part.

Vulcan had to reach new heights that will enable him to defeat Ho-Gyeong who was a powerful foe that could be considered more powerful than Sarantis.

The situation required Vulcan to break through a limit.

“Well, I always saw a way naturally as I did grunt works.”

In Rubel Continent, Filder’s training, and even in the Abandoned Dungeon, reaching new heights came naturally as he trained diligently.

Many have struggled and turned to despair after disproportionably small achievements from their hard work, but Vulcan have never experienced such.

‘If I really have talent... It wouldn’t stop here.’

Without hesitation, Vulcan promptly opened the gate.

Lighting the inside of the graveyard overflowing with ominous aura, Vulcan slowly walked toward the deeper side of the place.

# Chapter 42 - Underground Graveyard

---

The monsters of the Underground Graveyard were substantially harder to deal with than ordinary ones.

The monsters that Vulcan fought until now charged at him while relying only on their strength or speed. With such monsters, it was easy to defeat them once he figured out their attack patterns.

However, the two skeleton knights in front of Vulcan’s eyes were demonstrating no gap in their defenses. Using their superb swordsmanship as the basis, they came at Vulcan from both sides.

<div>[Skeleton Knight (Ex-Swordmaster)]</div> <div>[461Lv]</div>
<div>[Skeleton Warrior (Ex-Mercenary King)]</div> <div>[455Lv]</div>

It felt like dueling against Zenith-Rate Warriors.

Of course, it took longer to hunt, and it also took more mental focus.

These were opponents even Vulcan could not take lightly.

Because of this, he tried hard to avoid running into three or more at once.

BOOMBABOOM!

Vulcan threw countless number of magic attacks at them, but the skeletons created barriers with their swords to block the attacks.

Although the barrage was unsuccessful in dealing any effective damage, it was still enough to stop them from relentlessly charging toward Vulcan.

Vulcan lightly stepped around to avoid the skeletons and poured out different amount of magic attacks to the two skeletons. The one that was pressured less by the attacks came first toward Vulcan.

Finally, one of skeletons managed to come all the way to the front of Vulcan after piercing through a storm of magic attacks.

Vulcan charged toward the skeleton as he cast Hellfire.

BOOM!

Vulcan cast this particular Hellfire with more care than the other ones he had been launching. The Hellfire appeared without any



notice, and the skeleton, unable to dodge the attack, stepped on the Hellfire and seriously lost its balance. At that moment, Vulcan's blade fell down across the skeleton.

CLANK! CLANK CLANK CLANK!

By Vulcan's blazing fast swords strikes, the entire area was being filled with after images of his blade. The skeleton had its hands full blocking Vulcan's blade strikes.

However, because of flame magic attacks coming in between, it was not able to maintain a proper combat stance, and it had no choice but to collapse to the floor with its skull broken.

The rest was refreshingly simple. Vulcan beat the crap out of the remaining skeleton. He could hear a notification sound through the SYSTEM,

[Experience Points Went Up.]

[Level Up!]

“Phew!”

That meant Vulcan was now at level 400.

It had been six months since he started hunting in the Underground Graveyard.

In that time, Vulcan went up by 50 levels.

It was not a bad number. Even in ordinary games, more a character leveled up, exponentially higher experience points were required for further levels.

If this pace kept up, the level up speed was not falling far behind from how things were in the Abandoned Dungeon.

It appeared that, in exchange for the monsters being tedious to fight against, they were giving out more experience points.

‘Now I am a Zenith-Rate... Well, to beat Ho-Gyeong, at minimum, I need to go up to the Ultra-Zenith Rate. Still...’

That was not all. Vulcan had to do better than just barely hanging his head above the beginning end of the Ultra-Zenith Rate. He had to be at a height that could easily overcome the wall of the Ultra-Zenith Rate.

Unfortunately, Vulcan had not reached that height.

Because Vulcan was the type that improved best through real combat, he thought he might reach an enlightenment quickly since he had these skeletons to fight against, which were excellent training opponents. However, the reality was not so easy.

‘Well, since Lee Jung-Yup took 150 years from being a First-Rate to upper end of the Zenith-Rate...’

Expecting a substantial change in just half a year was being greedy.

Vulcan thought that he shouldn’t be so impatient.

Also, it wasn’t like he wasn’t gaining anything.

It wasn’t a rapid growth that would be obvious at a glance by anyone. Still, there was something he gained that was going help him in the long run.

Vulcan recalled the state of his body when he was at level 399 and started to compare the current status at level 400.

His health, strength, mana and magic power increased slightly. However, they were definitely developed further from before, and he was also able to determine that there had been subtle changes in his body for those developments.

In the past, even when he leveled up, Vulcan didn’t really have a feel for it. He just figured, ‘I got stronger. My strength is greater than before, and the damage from my magic is greater as well,’ and didn’t think much of anything else. He had no interest on the changes in his body that was being made to the stat developments.

‘Actually, I had no way of knowing back then.’

However, it was different now.

Vulcan went through structured training on traditional magic and learned the theories. Now, Vulcan was able to realize that his body was making subtle changes to fit the forced increase in mana and magic power.

Ever since he realized this, Vulcan had been aware of the changes and examining them since. He had been making strict comparison of it all for status before and after each level up.

Having repeated the process for so many times, Vulcan gained a rough idea of the direction that he was headed. In other words, it meant he was now able to make a prediction on the path forward.

‘Mr. Filder or the elder Beruneru, this must have been the reason why they had high expectations for me.’

Combining the Player’s SYSTEM with the talent of a traditional mage. It was miracle that was possible only if one possessed both traits. Vulcan have opened the gate to the possibility of being able to steadily achieve further development without relying on capricious unconscious world of enlightenment that came by occasionally in unpredictable times.

Actually, Vulcan’s understanding of magic was steadily increasing.

## [Passive Skill List]

---

\*Combat Mastery S

\*Weapon Mastery A

\*Defense Mastery B

\*Dodge Mastery S

---

Fire Mastery S

Lightning Mastery S

Cold Mastery C -> B (Rank Up)

Necromancy Mastery C -> B (Rank Up)

The cold element and necromancy magic were the ones Vulcan hardly ever used. Still, through the examination of the internal workings of magic, Vulcan's understanding of magic improved, and their rank went up naturally.

‘Although it would’ve been nice if fire mastery or lightning mastery went up too...’

However, that was being too greedy.

If any of the two went up in rank, Vulcan wondered if he would be looking at having power rivaling that of someone at level beyond 600, perhaps even level 700.

Of course, there was nothing wrong about him having such excessive greed.

On the contrary, using his greed as the basis, Vulcan was pouring in more effort than ever.

There were his fury toward Ho-Gyeong and Bellon, longing for his homeworld and his family, and his ambition for reaching greater heights, which took a place deep inside his heart before he realized.

These were taking on a role of a three-horse carriage that lead Vulcan to greater heights.

“Phew, the cooling down time had been filled already.”

Vulcan confirmed that his two-hour long cooling down for the Super Heated Inferno was completely filled. With excited steps, Vulcan walked toward deeper end of the place.

Under normal circumstances, he could fight two, or, if he

overexerted himself, he could only fight up to three. However, with Super Heated Inferno, it was a different story.

It was because, within the Super Heated Inferno, if he transformed to a flame spirit, he could teleport indefinite number of times.

Compare to Blink, which required a long time to prepare, it was a difference between the ground and the sky. If he tackled the skeletons using this superior mobility, he could fight six to seven of them at once.

‘I wish its cooling time was 30 minutes shorter.’

As Vulcan murmured inside about his wishful thinking, he provoked and gathered skeletons and used the Super Heated Inferno.

The inside of the cursed Underground Graveyard filled up with scorching heat.

---

CLANK CLANK!

CLASH!

Sounds of blades clashing echoed through the entrance of the Underground Graveyard. As if they had been fighting for a long period of time, Jake could see Dokgo Hoo and Lee Jung-Yup sweating all over.

It wasn't all that fun to watch for Jake. At first, he mindlessly watched their duels in awe, but having watched similar scenes for over a month, he got sick of it.

In fact, even from the start, their movements were too fast and unpredictable, making them difficult to follow or even observe very well, and now, their duels were like a random channel on a television that someone chose to leave on and watch with a vacant stare just because he had absolutely nothing else to do or watch.

“Let's end it here.”

“... Uuuuuuu. God damn it!”

“This makes 31 win out of 31 duels? Well, it seems meaningless to continue duels.”

“Shut up! Five days, no, after two weeks, I'll definitely stick a blade in your face!”

“... Grand Warrior Dokgo Hoo, our enemy is Ho-Gyeong. Please watch what you say.”

“You are just a rag from a faction, and you dare to butt in! Do you want to fight a round?”

“I'll decline.”



Dokgo Hoo glared at Jang-Ho, who was calmly criticizing Dokgo Hoo. Dokgo Hoo sighed and put away his blade. He plummeted on the ground and said,

“I shouldn’t bother talking to you. It’s not like I’m talking to a statue of the Buddha.”

“...”

As Dokgo Hoo said, Jang-Ho was extremely emotionless and pokerfaced. He was not the type to reveal his emotions. It was to the point that made others wonder how could Ho-Gyeong have bought a grudge from someone like Jang-Ho.

Dokgo Hoo tried everything he could to provoke the man, but they were futile.

With his wariness toward them subsided to some extent, since a month ago, Dokgo Hoo released their pressure point suppressions and had been dueling against Lee Jung-Yup everyday. Even in middle of all this, Jang-Ho stood there still without a word like a monk going through a meditation training while facing a wall.

Dokgo Hoo turned his head and looked at Vulcan. He could see Vulcan preparing to go back to the Underground Graveyard.

“Little brother, before you go, please give me a shot of water magic!”

# PSHUUU

“... Thanks for using the magic, but why does it feel so unpleasant...”

After being hit by a sudden dump of water, Dokgo Hoo turned around as he complained.

Soon, he entered the world only of his own.

Lee Jung-Yup gazed at Dokgo Hoo once and turned his head to look at Vulcan.

He appeared to be in hurry. He quickly disappeared to beyond the skeleton gate.

‘He is impatient although it has only been a year.’

Dokgo Hoo, the one who had not made a single step of progress, appeared to have plenty of nerve and time to spare. On the contrary, Vulcan, the one who had been seeing noticeable developments, was looking more impatient.

Lee Jung-Yup could not understand this.

‘He is at a height that others may never get to even if they spent

their entire life. To think he is showing signs of impatience only after a year...'

Lee Jung-Yup didn't know much about magic, but he was well aware of the fact that, for a martial artist, being impatient will definitely become a poison.

He have seen countless number of martial artists overexerting themselves in order to reach a new height that they were not having an easy time achieving. In such cases, they fell into temptation of pushing themselves beyond the limit and ended up causing their energy to run amok, making them permanently crippled from being able to practice martial arts for the rest of their lives.

Of course, Vulcan had talent far superior to such people, and since he was a Player, a different type of warrior from his own kind, the situation was different. However...

'I hope he get through this carefully. For the sake of my revenge... You need to do well.'

Lee Jung-Yup's eyes calmed down to a chill state.

Around that time, Vulcan, who had gone to the inside of the Underground Graveyard, was running through the corridors at a fast pace.

It was to level up faster by hunting more skeletons, even if it was

just a little bit more. Unlike the usual, where he hunted two at a time, or three at a time when there were many, he was facing four skeletons at once.

If Jake saw this, he would have stopped Vulcan even if he had to bite on to his leg. Fighting four skeletons at once was that reckless. However, Vulcan was not hesitating.

On the contrary, he was frustrated with himself for not being able to handle five of them at once.

[Zenith-Rate Mage Swordsman Vulcan]

[428Lv]

The number of levels he gained in the past six months was only 28. Unlike the first six months before this cycle, where he gained 50 levels, the progress was seriously lacking.

Also, the growth rate was gradually declining.

Of course, Vulcan was well aware of the reason why the growth rate was declining.

As he avoided sharp attacks by skeletons flying toward him, Vulcan furrowed.

‘The difference between my level and the monsters... Now there is almost none!’

In the past, when he was still a Third-Rate, there were days where he gained 30 levels in just one day. He was a Third-Rate only in appearance. His real strength was closer to that of someone with level 500.

Back then, Vulcan, who had incredible abilities for someone with low levels, he was able to literally sweep and collect higher level monsters and gain explosive level ups.

There was the Goblin Dungeon, the Abandoned Dungeon, and after that, there was the time he was able to level up at an insane pace through power leveling with the help of other Zenith-Rate warriors at the north gate field.

Finally, at this place, the Cursed Underground Graveyard, the place of an other hidden quest, Vulcan had been facing monsters with substantially higher level than himself all this time, and by doing so, he had been running at the full speed without ever using the brake.

However, that streak came to an end now.

Now, the difference in level between the monsters and Vulcan had narrowed substantially. To expect explosive level up like in the past, the situation had changed too much.

Of course, through examining the inner workings of techniques and magic, Vulcan had been achieving small but steady enlightenments and continuing to develop further.

However, with just this, with just this rate of growth, it was not enough to satisfy Vulcan.

‘If I had a lot of time, I would have been satisfied with the current rate, but ...’

Vulcan’s true goal was being re-united with his families. Killing Ho-Gyeong was just a side objective that he had to accomplish to get there.

At this frustratingly slow level up speed, which was making Vulcan feel like he could explode from anguish, if he just waited around for a true enlightenment that he had no way of knowing when it would come, there was a possibility that he would never get to the target height even after ten years.

‘After end of many long years, after reaching the height, beating the crap out of and killing Ho-Gyeong, after punishing Bellon, after hunting down Sarantis... When I return to the home world after all that, what if my parents are all dead? What am I going to do when I have to face my little sister, who would be in middle age by then?’

‘Even now... Almost ten years have passed.’

Vulcan wanted to say no to any further delay.

Because of this, Vulcan chose a rather risky method.

If the monsters' levels were too low for fast level up, then he just had to hunt more monsters at a faster rate.

Of course, Vulcan was not at the height where he could easily hunt monsters at 460 levels.

Because of this, he abandoned his usual safety oriented tendencies and chose to corner himself to the edge.

# Chapter 43 -Underground Graveyard (Part 2)

---

Plan, estimate, establish a stable flow of battle, and get to the desired outcome.

When it came to battles, Vulcan always liked having a plan prepared that would allow him to carry out the battle in a stable and safe manner.

It was just like how a skilled chess player lead the inferior opponent in the direction he wanted.

‘From the beginning to the end, I should do it like this.’

‘If I do it this way, I can neutralize it without taking any risk.’

Vulcan always have started battles with these mindsets, and he enjoyed such methods. He was different from other powerful warriors.

When it came to training and trying to reach new heights, he found it to be unnecessarily dangerous to go through the kind of a duel where he would have to put his life on the line. So, instead, he always stayed within safe and well defended positions.

He always believed doing so was enough.



After all, the loss would be unacceptable if he trained while putting his life at risk and really died in the process.

However...

Like that, nine years have passed, and he was facing a real wall for the first time in his training.

Now, he could no longer achieve rapid growth through by playing it safe in battles, so, for the first time, Vulcan was trying out a more aggressive style while taking on risks.

WHOOOSH!

Skeleton Knight's blade rose up from below to strike Vulcan. Normally, while also considering other Skeletons charging toward him, Vulcan would have moved far away to avoid them.

However, this time, Vulcan was not widening the distance. Instead, he swung his blade down and deflected Skeleton Knight's blade, and using the reaction from the collision, he swung his blade up and landed a solid hit on its jaw.

BAAM!

Of course, it was not so weak that it would collapse in a single strike.

It lost its balance and faltered a little from the shock, but that was about it. Before long, the Skeleton Knight got a hold of itself and joined the other Skeleton Warrior for a joint strike formation.

KAGAGAGANG!

BOOMBABOOM!

Vulcan pushed himself to the edge of the limit and poured out magic and sword techniques.

For attacks he couldn't deflect using his blade, he stopped them using magic. In cases he didn't have the chance to cast magic, he clashed his blade against them and made it past the dangers.

He actively used his S-Rank dodge skill to maneuver past as many attacks as possible.

In middle of all these, Vulcan never took a step back.

Even though he could fight them from a substantially safer position by taking a few steps back, he didn't.

He could not allow the time being wasted from doing so.

**SLASH SLASH**

Vulcan got cuts and bled from all over his body.

Still, unlike how he had been going about it passively, he was able to kill the skeletons at a significantly faster rate.

To move on to the next targets, Vulcan quickly cast skills.

Whenever he lost focus and let his guard down a little, deadly attacks close enough to claim his life came to threaten him.

Still, thanks to Jake's high quality armors and Vulcan's Iron Body technique, Vulcan could avoid getting seriously injured. Of course, the special potions also played their parts.

Like berserker warriors, Vulcan threw himself into the battle without much care for his own safety.

---

Yet another year passed by.

Now, Vulcan's level was 465. In one year, he gained 37 levels. To other Players, it was a shockingly rapid growth, but it was not satisfactory to Vulcan.

Moreover, now Vulcan's level was higher than the monsters in the graveyard.

The boss monster Death Knight Muruolla was level 500, but it was regenerated only once every ten days. On top of that, it was hard to claim that Vulcan's abilities were far superior to that of a

level 500 monster, so killing Muruolla was not easy.

Even when Vulcan defeated Muruolla for the first time after a few dozen close calls with death, Vulcan learned that even the hidden quests could give him junk rewards.

Just in case, Vulcan defeated Muruolla for the second time, hoping for a better reward, but again, it only tossed him a normal item.

Since then, Vulcan didn't even bother to look toward the boss room. Instead, he focused on slaying other monsters.

WHOOSH.

CLANK!

PUK!

Vulcan was now completely accustomed to his offensive combat style.

He attacked, attacked, and avoided only the most dangerous ones and attacked again.

When it came to the monster's attacks he could withstand, he chose to flinch his eyes once and just take it. In return, he used the opportunity he gained from it. Without wasting the chance, he

thrusting in the maximum damage he could deal on the monster.

Vulcan didn't want to take a step back. Instead, he chose to be as aggressive and quick as possible in his offensive measures. The idea was to bite hard enough to strike fear in the opponent.

‘Well, because these guys are undead, it doesn't seem to have an effect on them in particular, but...’

It had been a year since Vulcan abandoned his safe style of combat and changed to reckless and instinctive style, and he obtained an achievement in the passive skill.

The Iron Body technique's rank rose from B to A.

It was an achievement that would not have been possible with his past style of combat, where he usually ran around avoiding the attacks and swung his sword only at the certain opportunities he made with his magic that created an opening in the opponent's defense.

It was not a huge development, but Vulcan was fairly satisfied with the growth.

Also, there was one other thing that excited Vulcan.

‘My movement using the Thunder God's Might is... getting faster!’

When Vulcan abandoned out-boxer style combat and switched to focus on up-close combat, at first, it was definitely difficult to exchange blade strikes with the skeletons.

However, he gradually got use to the up-close combat, and as he started to find attacks easier than dodging, a lot of things changed.

The number of instances of Vulcan needing to defend at all had been reduced significantly.

In the past, often times, Vulcan was overwhelmed by their numbers, and he had no choice but to be cornered and take the hit before he could start his offensive measures.

‘But now, I almost never have to do it that way anymore.’

Surprisingly, the Thunder God’s Might was far more effective in offensive movements. It felt like he was borrowing from the impatience of the Thunder God. Whenever he actively sought to push against the opponents to deal damage, the Thunder God allowed him to borrow even greater strength.

Having realized this somehow, Vulcan started to forego defense, and instead he shifted his style to focus on offense. Now, he could actually see the skeletons being overwhelmed by his attacks instead.

The situation was quite literally befitting the old proverb, ‘the

best defense is offense.'

"Huuuu."

Vulcan finished yet another battle against the skeletons.

Instead of jumping into the next battle, he thought about the past. He could almost hear the voice of Bereneru scolding him.

'You rascal! You are obviously short tempered and hot blooded. You are a perfect match with flame and lightning magic elements that tend to do whatever they want, so why are you always so focused on dodging all over the place and defending?'

'What are you talking about? Nobody is as polite and understanding as me.'

'You are still barking out nonsense like a mutt... Your innate personality can't stand it! It's obvious from the fact that you can't use earth or water element based magic!'

"Isn't that just like assumptions base on bloodtypes? When I was in the Rubel Continent, even the short-tempered people learned water element magic. There were a lot of people like that.'

'That's why those bastards had low class abilities... Tsk. Tsk. Looks like you won't get it no matter what at the moment. Later, when you truly understand what I told you today, just don't lose that chance!'

“Do whatever they want... offensive... hot blooded...”

Today in particular, Vulcan felt that Beruneru’s words were really hitting the heart of the matter. As he thought about it some more, he realized there was another time like this.

‘Was it when I was doing gruntwork under Mr. Filder to train for masteries?’

He couldn’t remember exactly what happened, but once he let go of something that was constraining him, he was able to move much faster. He remembered a general impression about something like that happening.

Back then, he was not able to get a grip on his head because The Six came by all of sudden. Now that he thought about it carefully, he felt like he could understand.

He now understood that the attitude he had at that moment was an important clue for the direction he should take as a mage for the rest of his life.

“Now that I have realized it, I should practice it.”

**PAZIZIZIK**

Vulcan quickly chugged down the potion and activated the



Thunder God's Might to the full power.

‘For the next one year... Let's live like Dokgo Hoo!’

Vulcan made up his mind to try out dangerous training. He charged toward the deeper end of the graveyard.

---

A month passed.

His level was already at 469. If he gained just one more level, he was going to be able to equip the legendary weapon, the Heavenly Lightning Blade.

However, Vulcan was forgetful of this fact at the moment. Completely focused in the battle, he was destroying skeletons at an incredible pace.

BAAM!

KADUDUDURUK.

Skeleton Knights and Warriors couldn't even dare to think about attacking Vulcan. Overwhelmed by incredibly fast attacks being poured at them, the skeletons barely managed to defend themselves.

With just five Skeletons, they were seriously lacking in power to corner Vulcan.

“KUUUUAAAA!”

Extremely excited, Vulcan repeatedly destroyed skeletons and charged forward. He was unstoppable.

Before long, all skeletons were destroyed, and the only thing left in front of his view was the stone gate with an ominous eye lodged on it.

If it was like any other day, he would have just ignored the gate and returned to the entrance of the Underground Graveyard, but this time, he didn't want to.

‘You bastard that keeps on giving garbage items!’

Toward the eyeball that was looking around all over the place, Vulcan firmly planted his left fist.

PUK!

SQUASH.

After the eyeball exploded, Vulcan didn't even give it a glance. Instead, he went right in to the boss room.

Toward Vulcan, Muruolla the Death Knight said,

- The ancient ... curse...

“Oh just shut up!”

BAAM!

By Vulcan's heavy train like attack, Muruolla's body faltered.

That was not all. Following behind Vulcan's back, several dozens of lightning and flame magic came to attack Muruolla.

BOOMBABABABOOM!

KUAKUAKUA!

Muruolla, who fell into a pinch in a blink of an eye, said to Vulcan,

- You... runt... you should listen... to the end when... someone's talking....! You are just a runt who's blood on the head from birth... isn't even dry yet...!

Vulcan couldn't care less about what it had to say. He grabbed on and gave it a good beating.

The Thunder God's Strike was activated unconsciously and

stroke through Muruolla's entire body armor, and there were magic attacks being poured on to it.

With cracking sound, Muruolla's armors fell.

Silver colored skeletons that looked sturdier than the fallen armor awaited Vulcan. With the battle finally entering its second stage, the Death Knight summoned a giant sword.

## WOOONG

Souls lingered around the sword and wailed. The giant sword was a soul stealer that absorbed the opponent's health endurance upon each strike.

To make up for the damage it sustained up to this point, Muruolla grabbed hold of the sword with all of its strength.

- Die...!

Vulcan got a grip of himself as he saw the monster in front of him exuding ominous aura. Also, he was thinking it was too bad that his moment was cut short,

‘How regrettable. Just a little longer, and I certainly could have grown another step.’

Thinking about how he was able to attack Muruolla with nothing getting on his way and how he was able to generate magic more powerful and faster than the usual, he could not hide his disappointment.

However, the moment had already passed.

Vulcan put strength on the tip of his feet to avoid the giant sword coming down toward his head.

‘Actually, wait.’

Vulcan was about to move back and avoid the sword, but he stopped his body. It was a critical and a dangerous moment, but for some reason, to Vulcan, it felt like the time was passing by a hundred times slower.

As he looked at Muruolla’s giant sword slowly approaching, Vulcan thought about the one thing that realized as he had been hunting down skeletons for the past month without anything getting on his way.

It was childish, but the attitude that was most becoming of the lightning and flame magic was,

‘Give beating before getting beat, and kill before being killed!’

It was really a very Dokgo Hoo-like way of thinking, but Vulcan finally admitted it that even inside himself, there were simpleton

and volcano-like sides.

He also came to acknowledge that this tendency inside him was leading him to a brand new world.

With that acknowledged, he thought about what would be the right move now that he is facing against a strong opponent like this.

‘Should I move back to avoid the danger for a moment? Or should I give it a beating before it could strike me? Of course... the latter!’

Vulcan decided to give Muruolla a mighty strike.

Of course, it was not easy to ignore the fearsome giant sword falling toward his head. His plan was not going to be easy to even attempt without being at the peak of his offensive power, which was possible a moment ago from being in middle of chaos.

However, Vulcan had a skill that could bring him to the edge of excitement.

‘Beast Transformation!’

At an instant, his physical strength and movement and attack speed increased by large margins. Vulcan violently put forth his claws. He could not hold a blade, but it was irrelevant.

Of all attacks that Vulcan demonstrated up to this point, this was the fastest of them all.

Before Muruolla’s soul stealer sword could reach Vulcan’s head, Vulcan’s attack reached Muruolla’s stomach.

KUAKUAKUAKUAKANG!

Muruolla was bounced off as it dragged on the floor and made it crack like cookies. However, Vulcan didn’t have a chance to mind how Muruolla died.

[Experience Points Went Up.]

[Level Up!]

[Zenith-Rate Mage Swordsman Vulcan]

[470Lv]

With the experience points increased, and with the restriction on the legendary weapon, which he wished to use for a long time, finally unlocked, the sense of hard-earned accomplishment surrounded Vulcan’s entire body.

On top of this, there were also the destructive instinct and excitement from the Beast Transformation, and adding the Thunder God's Might to the mix, an incredible feeling of upheaval came to Vulcan.

“...”

Vulcan was like that for a moment. When the Beast Transformation expired, he strongly wished it could continue. When he was in the state of excitement, he was approaching the true nature of the lightning and flame elements.

At that moment, like a possessed person, Vulcan opened the inventory and grabbed hold of the legendary weapon that was exuding holy light, the Heavenly Lightning Blade.

“Ah...!”

With the blade's option, the 20% increase in the lightning element training efficiency, the remnants of the enlightenment that have not left Vulcan yet from a moment synergized with the Heavenly Lightning Blade's boost in stats.

Its powerful increase in stats filled the last step that was lacking in Vulcan's enlightenment, and that lead him to a brand new world.

[Lightning Mastery's Rank Went Up from S to SS.]



---

“Huuuu.”

Vulcan took a deep breath.

Now he had become a powerful warrior who could no longer be contained within Act 1.

Blindingly bright golden sparks surrounded his entire body.

## Chapter 44 - Putting An End To It

---

Like always, to recover their internal energies, Lee Jung-Yup and Dokgo Hoo were performing meditation through slow breathing to direct internal energy through the bloodstream. There was Jang-Ho standing next to the two men sitting in lotus position.

This place was well hidden, and it was unlikely that they would be discovered, but just in case, he was standing guard for them.

It was showing how old fashioned and meticulous he was.

“...!”

Jang-Ho, who was standing guard and being wary of the surroundings, heard something unusual.

It was the sounds of Vulcan's footsteps generated as he walked toward them from the inside of the Underground Graveyard. Also, there was a presence of a mighty existence tearing through the air.

BOOM!

The gate at the entrance of the graveyard exploded from a powerful force. A few pieces of bones flew away at high speeds as if a claymore exploded. Surprised, Jang-Ho raised and swung his fists.

# WOONG

A grand scale level of energy wave was poured out and protected Dokgo Hoo, Lee Jung-Yup and Jake from the shards.

A loud sound of shockwave shook the underground cave, and stone crumbles fell from the ceiling. Jang-Ho created a gust of wind with his fist to clear the line of sight and confirm the man responsible for all this.

However, Jang-Ho could only see the back side of the man.

Before long, the man had already ran outside the quest area. As Jang-Ho watched this, he murmured,

“Vulcan...!”

Noticing his golden lightning surrounding the body, incredible speed where another can't even respond properly to, and moreover, the aura of the strongest that could be felt naturally even from having a glance at his back, Jang-Ho realized that,

‘Vulcan, you broke through the wall!’

Jang-Ho intuitively realized that Vulcan made a giant leap toward the new ground. He was vacantly staring at the direction where Vulcan just left, but he quickly got a hold of his mind.

‘I must not let him go there by himself.’

He was certainly stronger.

Before this, Jang-Ho thought Vulcan was about as strong as himself or a little stronger. Now, Jang-Ho couldn't even gauge on how strong Vulcan was.

He figured that Vulcan must be full of confidence and have rushed out to the surface because Vulcan is almost certain of his victory against Ho-Gyeong on a duel to the death, about nine out of ten chances of success.

However, even so, it was not good to let him just charge in by himself like a wild boar who was provoked by a near-miss arrow.

‘If, by a bad luck, he runs into the members of the Order before he could get to Ho-Gyeong...’

Before he could challenge Ho-Gyeong for a duel to the death, he could die from their joint attack.

No matter how strong Vulcan have become, the Order was still an organization with many Zenith-Warriors among its ranks.

If Vulcan was going to show off his height to everyone, it was not going to be too late to do so after returning to the city safely with Dokgo Hoo and Lee Jung-Yup.

“T... That guy, why is he acting like that!”

It appeared Jake was thinking the same thing. He crumpled his face and pointed toward where Vulcan went.

“Really. If he achieved something, he should calm down first and explain it to us. He should spend time making a plan with us and stuff too! Also, why is he running out in such a hurry? What for? We could just open a portal and get moving!”

Jang-Ho was thinking the same thing.

The Vulcan that they knew was a methodological man who always had a lot of thoughts in his mind and made moves after careful considerations. The rash move by Vulcan just now was completely different from how Vulcan had always been.

Watching Vulcan acting like Dokgo Hoo, Jang-Ho also tilted his head to the sides in wonder.

“For now, let’s go to the city after Lee Jung-Yup and Dokgo Hoo complete their energy cycle meditation. They will probably complete it in next fifteen minutes.”

“Ugh... We should. I hope nothing bad happens to Vulcan in the mean time.”

Jang-Ho seriously hoped as he looked at the Underground Graveyard's gate that Vulcan destroyed.

‘I hope he got far stronger than I ever imagined.’

Meanwhile, Vulcan was not worried about anything at all. His lack of worries was to the point it was making Jake and Jang-Ho's worries look ridiculous.

Vulcan was only focused on getting to the Beloong City as fast as he could. With all of his strength, he charged forward.

**KUWA KUWA KUWA KUWA**

Numerous Hellgoats in the north gate field rushed toward Vulcan to attack him, but it was useless. Before they could get close, Vulcan disappeared with his incredible speed.

In disappointment, Hellgoats made goat-like cry sounds, scratched their heads, and returned to their places. That's all they could do.

Literally, Vulcan was running through the field with absolutely nothing getting on his way.

Vulcan had become like a stream of lightning. He spotted a smile on his face.

‘This feels exhilarating!’

He felt so light that he wondered if he could fly.

All the things that had been chaining him down until this point felt trivial now.

Until now, Vulcan had been trying to go about things carefully with plans and avoid risk or danger. He also had been willing to go along with the political situations for that end. Now, he almost felt foolish for having lived so long thinking that way.

‘I’m not even all that smart to begin with. I wonder why I had been living my life like that?’

He wanted to get stronger steadily within the bounds of safety.

Although he knew that his brain was not cut out to spin all that well to begin with, he forced it to spin and made plans and did his best in Asgard, and he had been doing everything he could to move toward ways that would minimize dangers or risks.

However, in the end,

‘I became the sworn enemy of the Order. I was abandoned by the Denomination as well.’

Now, he had no reason to act that way anymore.

Without giving it any more thought, Vulcan embraced the power erupting from within.

He could feel the power of the Thunder God's Might seething inside him. Vulcan found confidence in its power. He felt like everything will go well if he allowed its offensive power to flow free to his hearts satisfaction.

Actually, he felt that letting the power go wild was the only way to bring about the best outcome.

‘Ho-Gyeong, Bellon... I’m going to destroy whichever that comes in sight first.’

The speed of Vulcan dashing through the north gate field increased further.

---

Ho-Gyeong was taking a walk through the north gate field. He was here to blow off some steam against monsters.

Of course, there was no way doing something like this was going to make his worries disappear.

Even before this, he came to the north gate field and turned the monsters into ground meat several times, but every time, all that Ho-Gyeong was left with was a sense of emptiness and even a bit of fear.



‘I sent eight.’

The eight that he sent were no ordinary warriors. All of them were considered to be on the top end of the Zenith-Rate.

The subordinates that he sent could be called the core members of the Order, but not even one of them returned alive.

‘Even Lee Jung-Yup, the 7th in the Golden Ranking! Fighting them all would have been difficult even for me...’

This was the reason why he sent the eight warriors.

Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo were graduates in training, but they were still not fully matured at the time. It was difficult for Ho-Gyeong to imagine that their battle against eight of the Order’s most powerful warriors resulted in the death of everyone in both sides.

‘Also, it is possible... Maybe not everyone died.’

After a search to find his subordinates that never returned, the Order found traces of the battle at a place.

However, all they found were disturbances and destructions on the field. The whole scene looked unnatural as if someone destroyed all evidence.

By worrisome thoughts constantly coming up to his head, the

expression on Ho-Gyeong's face hardened.

‘Looks like... I should assume at least one of them have broke through the wall.’

The sudden awakening in middle of battle was the one thing that Ho-Gyeong was most concerned about.

It was most likely that one of the two made a leap into becoming an Ultra-Zenith-Rate at an instant, cleaned up Ho-Gyeong's subordinates, and went into hiding.

Ho-Gyeong figured the awakened one must be in a safe place somewhere and sharpening his blade of vengeance.

Because of this, since that incident, Ho-Gyeong had never gone anywhere by himself. Instead, he always had his subordinates accompany him.

He figured that even the awakened ones will be lacking in power to kill him if they fought him along with his subordinates on his side.

It was hurting his pride, but it could not be helped. If he went somewhere by himself and got ambushed, he was not going to be able to be sure about the safety of his own life.

‘I wish they just left Act 1 instead.’

Just like Ho-Gyeong found their existence to be a problem, if Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo also found Ho-Gyeong's forces to be eye sores, it was possible that they may have defeated Sarantis in secret and left the Act 1.

It was an end to the trouble that was the best for Ho-Gyeong, and it was also not too low on possibilities.

It was what Ho-Gyeong was hoping for.

However, the situation was not flowing in the direction he hoped for.

There was a golden light that could be seen in the far distance.

A powerful energy could be felt from the direction. It was enough even for Ho-Gyeong, who was in deep thoughts, to turn around and look.

The light was very far away. It was on the bleeding edge of the horizon, but before he realized, the man was already close enough for Ho-Gyeong to see his face.

Ho-Gyeong strained and opened his eyes wide in surprise.

Having confirmed who it was, Ho-Gyeong groaned,

‘Vulcan!’

Ho-Gyeong quickly drew his blade and raised up his power to 120%. His subordinates, having realized late that it was Vulcan that was approaching this way, followed suit and assumed combat stances.

Baek-Un, the Order’s adjutant, said,

“My lord, it may not be the place for me to say this, but...”

He was trying to pretend to be calm, but the look on his face was hardened even more from his attempt to look calm, so instead, he actually looked like he was choking in fear.

Ho-Gyeong worried if his own face had a similar expression.

“I think we should call for more people.”

SHUUUUOOK.

BOOM!

Baek-Un went ahead and shoot up the signal flare without getting permission from Ho-Gyeong.

However, Ho-Gyeong couldn’t scold Beck-Un for his action.

There was Vulcan already standing in front of them. Vulcan looked confident and relaxed with nerves to spare.

As Ho-Gyeong looked at Vulcan standing like that, the insides of Ho-Gyeong chest became full of a sense of defeat.

‘Ultra-Zenith-Rate... No. It is not. This astonishing presence... it is like the time I met The Six for the first time...’

Ho-Gyeong gulped.

It looked like the outcome would be decided before his subordinates could arrive.

Toward Vulcan, who was just looking at Ho-Gyeong with curious eyes, one of Ho-Gyeong’s minions said,

“You runt, how dare you stand in the way of our Lord’s...”

**CHUZUZUZUK**

“KUUURK!”

THUMP.

“...!”

None of the subordinates, including Beck-Un, saw Vulcan discharging lightning.

All they noticed was that there was a sudden flash of light in front of them, but now, there was one of their allies falling to the ground with his face down and his body giving off smoke.

It was an incredibly fast lightning magic that even Ho-Gyeong had to focus with all of his might just to realize it.

“I’m trying to quietly dispose of just Ho-Gyeong and Bellon, yet...”

Vulcan moved his neck about in all directions and stretched his body.

As he moved, the golden lightning surrounding his body was making dangerous sounds.

“Others won’t let me be.”

“Uu... uu!”

Other than Beck-Un, two of the subordinates used lightened step technique and put distance from Vulcan.

It was a shameful act to abandon their own lord and run, but from the start, they were forced to join the Order because of its influence. They didn't have the royalty to throw away their lives in attempt to protect its lord.

Of course, those were their thoughts. With infuriated faces, Baek-Un and Ho-Gyeong glared at their back.

“You sons of bitc...!”

**PAZIZIZIZIC**

“KUUUUAK!”

“KUURK!”

**THUMP**

**THUMP**

“...!”

Although Ho-Gyeong and Baek-Un wanted to tear them apart for running away, and although they could not make any move because they were facing Vulcan, as if he was trying to say that Ho-Gyeong and Baek-Un were no threat to him, Vulcan conveniently

vaporized the nerves in the two subordinates who were running away.

Just by two streams of lightning strikes, three have died.

The lightning strikes launched from Vulcan's light movements with his blade contained deadly power to kill an opponent in a single strike.

“Looks like they think the lives of others are cheap and only their own lives are precious. Don't you think so? Mr. Ho-Gyeong the Blade King?”

With no change in the expression on his face, Ho-Gyeong glared at Vulcan.

On the other hand, it was Baek-Un that stepped forward and criticized Vulcan.

“You runt! Have you never thought about the disgrace that you inflicted upon our lord!”

Vulcan slowly tilted his head toward Baek-Un and glared at him.

Vulcan's eyes looked rather disinterested. However, inside his eyes, a suppressed rage could be felt. Feeling pressured by Vulcan's aura, Baek-Un took steps back, and Vulcan opened his mouth and said,



“If you asked me to have this conversation two years ago... I think I would have tried to spin my head to resolve all this in a good way, but...”

Vulcan held the Heavenly Lightning Blade in his hand. It was glowing with holy lights.

The blade’s tip was pointed toward Baek-Un. Sensing danger, Baek-Un charged toward Vulcan in order to snatch the first strike.

Baek-Un came at Vulcan with his ultimate attack, the Uni-Blade. He even poured in his life force with out any thoughts about conserving it, knowing that excessive use of the life force could result in permanent injuries or even death.

Volcano like power poured out from Beck-Un’s blade. Its power was unimaginable under ordinary circumstances. However, its power never reached Vulcan.

## **BOOMBABOOM**

Vulcan charged forward at an incredible speed, so fast that even Ho-Gyeong could not see.

The tip of Vulcan’s blade met with Baek-Un’s head and caused it to explode.

It was a violent scene as if he had been hit by an artillery round.

There were cerebrospinal fluids spewing out, and with cracked skull and blood splatter all over the place, they created a very grotesque scene.

**SPLASH SPLASH-**

Even as he stood with broken pieces of flash from his royal subordinate falling on his face, Ho-Gyeong glared at Vulcan. From his mouth, a dry voice could be heard,

“Ever since I saw you for the first time, I always thought you were an eyesore bastard that brings foul luck...”

“I feel the same. Whenever I saw you, I was always disgusted.”

Vulcan responded with voice full of life,

“But, it sure feels great to see the expression on your face now.”

# Chapter 45 - Putting An End To It (Part 2)

---

Ho-Gyoung thought about his past days.

He thought about the gazes from countless people.

It was pretty fun for him to watch scrunched faces of all these people who used to be called the most powerful warriors in their own worlds.

Against a wall they could never go over, or against a mountain they could not climb, countless warriors had look of despair in their faces.

When Ho-Gyoung was in the lower dimension, and when he was the strongest that far surpassed beyond everyone else, he had witnessed many such people.

In front of him, everyone was equal. It didn't matter if one belonged to good or evil. There was no need to rank anyone as skilled or unskilled either.

It didn't matter who it was.

Masters of large nobilities, monks who trained in the arts of internal energies for 60 years, best swordsmen in the world who earned their titles after countless battles...

‘No matter who they were, they were literally dying from despair, and I never got bored of the look on their faces.’

After uniting the Murim world, when he no longer had anything further to achieve, he was transported to Asgard all of sudden. Even then, his hobby did not change.

Although his power was no longer overwhelmingly superior to others like how it was in the lower dimensions, his talent was still too great to stay hidden. He was still the absolute power even in the Beloong City.

When he even surpassed Bellon, who was the number one in Golden Ranking before his arrival, he laughed in satisfaction and joy as he had a drink in his mansion.

It was extra delicious for him to watch the look of despair on faces of these powerful warriors who easily brought countless foes to their knees or greenhorns who have never faced any difficulties until arriving at Asgard.

However, now that he was facing a humongous mountain in front of him, a man overflowing with golden lightning, a man who was giving off animosity toward him without any hesitation, Ho-Gyoung could not help the expression on his own face.

The height that Vulcan reached was far beyond anything Ho-Gyoung ever imagined.

This was not something he would have been able to fight even if he had prepared for it.

‘The look on my face now... I probably... have the same face as they did.’

He tried his hardest to remain calm, but he knew the look on his own face was different from his usual look.

His face was so hardened that the area near his eyes trembled occasionally.

Because he was so nervous, his neck felt stiff.

He felt like he became just a Second-Rate bodyguard that was standing in front of him a moment ago.

‘I absolutely hate... embarrassing myself.’

He got a hold of himself as he hoped his appearance was not too pathetic.

Even if this was going to be his end, it was not right to show disgrace.

Ho-Gyoung feared that more than death.

Without saying anything, he went after Vulcan.

## KIGIGIGIGING

From behind Vulcan, several energy blades appeared and were launched toward his waist.

Several tens of energy blades, each about three feet in length, joined together like sharp teeth of a shark.

Creating energy blades without any medium in mid-air itself was an incredible feat, and their sizes were also unbelievable.

However, to Vulcan, they posed no threat.

Vulcan moved around in zigzag paths with his lightning fast movements, and as of result, the energy blade teeth always chewed on empty air.

Vulcan peeked a smile at Ho-Gyoung.

Watching this, Ho-Gyoung suddenly felt anger and wanted to say something, but he felt mana was covertly moving under his feet.

‘This can’t!’

BOOM!

He quickly threw his body and dodged it, but he was still exposed to the heat, and it was enough to completely burn off his shoes.

Ho-Gyoung's face was hardened in despair. Watching this, Vulcan said,

“You are supposed to be a man with blades as his specialty, yet all you are doing is trying to come up with petty schemes. You must still be thinking that you are on the top.”

“Kuk.”

Vulcan could have sent another wave of attack immediately after the last one, but he wasn't. It appeared he was that confident. He had that much to spare in margin of risk.

Vulcan was still looking at Ho-Gyoung with a big smile. Watching this, Ho-Gyoung knew immediately what Vulcan was thinking.

‘He is... just toying with me.’

Because Ho-Gyoung have done it often against other worries who were beneath him, he could tell for certain.

Ho-Gyoung no longer cared about putting up an emotionless face. Instead, he grabbed hold of his blade with both hands and charged toward Vulcan.

KAGAGAGAGANG.

Using the the highly compressed energy blade technique, the one that even Dokgo-Hoo had to be satisfied with drawing out 6.5 ft, Ho-Gyoung managed to draw over 10 ft.

Every time he swung his sword, the ground was cut open and overturned as if an earthquake happened.

Considering the Asgard was made of materials substantially harder than lower dimensions, its destructive power was unbelievable.

However, it was not hitting the target, hence useless.

He swung the sword with all of his strength, tried to raise it and pressure Vulcan with it, and even tried to overwhelm Vulcan with countless unpredictable swings in attempt to confuse his vision. However, none of them worked.

Every time he felt like he was starting to gain the upper hand, overwhelming lightning strike came at him in occasion as if Vulcan was just fooling around, and that disrupted the flow of Ho-Gyoung's sword play. It was making him infuriated.

Also, the look on Vulcan's face...



That expression!

It looked like Vulcan was treating Ho-Gyoung like some Third-Rate martial art teacher at some small town. It was making Ho-Gyoung really lose it.

His compressed energy blade was now at 14 ft, and exuding deadly power, it fell toward Vulcan.

“Kuuuaaaaa!”

BAM! BOOM!

“Ku... Huhuk... Kuluk, Kulkuk!”

However, instead of Vulcan, it was Ho-Gyoung that was bounced off.

An attack that was twice faster than Ho-Gyoung's came right at his stomach.

Because it was the blade's handle instead of the tip, it didn't kill him, but it was a mighty strike that disrupted the flow of energy in his entire body.

Ho-Gyoung threw up a fountain worth of blood as he back stepped about 20 steps.

Vulcan slowly walked toward Ho-Gyoung, who was having a hard time breathing.

From Vulcan's mouth, which was smiling, a cold voice was flowing out.

“If you don’t have anything else to show me, then let’s end it here.”

They were incredibly impudent words, the kind a mere greenhorn who had been in Asgard for less than six years shouldn’t say.

Ho-Gyoung wanted to tell Vulcan that, but the situation made him tightly shut his mouth.

No matter who looked at it, the difference in strength was obvious.

It felt like it would not have mattered if tens or even hundreds of his minions rushed to help him fight Vulcan.

It felt hopeless as if he had one of The Six standing in front of him.

At that moment, Ho-Gyoung truly realized that he could not possibly defeat Vulcan.

‘In this situation... I can’t even laugh.’

He had a pretty good guess since the first time he saw Vulcan. He figured it would be difficult even if he teamed up with Bellon, the battle king, and fought Vulcan.

In fact, even if there were three of warriors as powerful as himself, they would still have had to fear for their lives.

Despite that, Ho-Gyoung could not back down.

There was no worse disgrace than losing one’s life with his back turned.

“Since this will be the end for me... I might as well go after watching one more move.”

After squeezing out all of his courage to say those words, Ho-Gyoung raised his blade and used his greatest technique.

**WOOOONG**

It generated uncomfortable noise, enough to almost tear one’s eardrums.

With sounds of several millions of bees swarming, at an instant, several tens of thousands of blade like shapes filled the space. All

blades were engulfed in red energies as if they had blood veins.

Every one of the blades looked as if each contained enough power to cut through the sky and shatter the ground.

It was like a large tidal wave made of blades.

It looked more powerful than the Horuine's Water God's Wraith by several tens of folds. It intrigued Vulcan.

## KUWAGAGAGAGANG

Several tens of thousands of blades rushed toward Vulcan like a wave.

At that moment, it looked like Vulcan was about to be torn apart by a wave of blades.

There was no way Ho-Gyoung could have made this many energy blades. It was certain that there were real energy blades hiding amongst fake ones.

Ho-Gyoung was someone that ruled Beloong City for several hundred years, and this was his ultimate technique. Becoming of the title, the technique was very difficult and tricky to deal with.

In fact, Vulcan could not tell which ones were real and which

ones were illusions.

However, he didn't really worry.

He had no need to tell them apart.

'I just need to break them all.'

Vulcan lightly put forth his left hand.

However, what resulted from his gesture was anything but light.

'Ifrit's Fist' charged forward as it crushed every single one of Ho-Gyoung's blades.

## **KUGUGUGUGUGU**

Unlike the lightning mastery, the fire mastery's rank was not increased, but still, because Vulcan made a leap in height, the magic was showing a significantly more power.

Although he was still at S rank on the fire mastery, its power toward the end of the rank was certainly different from when he just obtained the S rank.

Vulcan figured this will be the end of Ho-Gyoung.

Since it appeared Ho-Gyoung squeezed out the last of his power to use his ultimate technique, it was obvious for Vulcan to think that way.

However, something didn't feel right. A combat sense as someone who has reached a certain height was tickling the inside of Vulcan's head.

Vulcan cringed for a moment, and eventually, he started to watch the scene nervously.

Also, Vulcan strained his eyes in order to witness the end of Ho-Gyoung. He wanted to see it for certain.

‘Kuuu... Incredible heat...!’

Although not all of the energy blades were swept away, Ho-Gyoung could feel the heat penetrating through.

Ho-Gyoung scrunched his face as if he just fell to hell.

At this rate, it was a certainty that he would be losing his life.

Regardless, because he figured he was going to lose, he had no interest in the outcome of the battle.

However, he was about to die not with a bang but with a

whimper, and he absolutely wanted to refuse that.

‘I have my pride as Ho-Gyoung the Blade King... I can’t hand over my life without putting up a fight!’

Ho-Gyoung focused all of his energy and sent it to his most treasured blade, the ‘Setting Sun.’

He even poured in the energy that he was supposed to be using for maintaining the protective energy blades. Although the Setting Sun was renowned to be an exceptional sword, even Setting Sun was starting to crack because it was unable to withstand the excessive focus of energy.

As the layer of protective energy blade started to thin, not just his cloth, but even his skin started to burn, but Ho-Gyoung didn’t care.

Instead, hoping for the moment the Setting Sun explodes, he poured in even more energy into the blade.

‘Once it is shattered to thousands of pieces, it will explode while being surrounded by highly compressed energy... If just one of these pieces pierce through his magic and strike that bastard...!’

Ho-Gyoung was already in shambles. The cloth and the hair on his entire body were burned to crisp.

However, his eyes were glowing sharply. His eyes were still

glaring at Vulcan without losing any strength.

‘The moment he lets his guard down, the moment he puts away his sword thinking that he have won... That will be the chance my final move could pierce through his body...’

Ho-Gyoung had thought this far, but he made a dumbfounded face after feeling a presence behind him.

Ho-Gyoung definitely saw someone standing far in front of him, and the figure was still there.

At the moment Vulcan’s blade was striking down toward him, in order to resolve his curiosity, Ho-Gyoung focused energy to his eyes to increase his eyesight.

There, he now could see the true identity of the figure in the distance.

‘You son of a bitch... You used skeleton illusion mag...!’

## **WHEEC**

Ho-Gyoung’s head flew up high into the air.

By Ifrit’s Fist, his body became ashes and disappeared, and his blade, the Setting Sun, which was overcharged with energy, lost



power and melted away from the heat.

Of course, Vulcan was an exception to all this.

Let alone any injuries, he didn't even have a single scratch on his body. He was completely clean.

He quickly moved away from the effective range of the Ifrit's Fist and landed with style.

He looked around the scene.

“This can't be...!”

“Our lord... Was killed by a rookie!”

“Huh...!”

“This is not possible!”

They were the Order's warriors that came after seeing the signal flare that Baek-Un shot to the sky.

It looked like there might be several hundreds of First-Rate and Zenith-Rate warriors, and they were looking at Vulcan with hollow expressions on their faces.

It was a sight that they never thought they would see until the day they leave Act 1 or died.

Everyone saw that Ho-Gyoung was defeated by an overwhelming power. There wasn't a single warrior who was not shocked.

“Hm.”

Vulcan, with pride in his eyes, glared at them.

Of course, there was nobody that directly faced his gaze.

The warriors all turned their heads away whenever Vulcan's gaze met with theirs.

They looked as if they ran into a grim reaper. They were unable to hide their nervousness.

“What should I do?”

Having heard Vulcan's voice just now, the warriors all flinched and started to shake.

It was one versus several hundred, but the difference in number meant nothing.

Vulcan was the one who was overwhelmingly powerful, and it

was the Order's side that was being overwhelmed.

They were masters of martial arts and combat who have climbed to where they were after stepping on countless other talented beings. However...

In front of a monster named Vulcan, they were no different from lambs in front of a wolf.

Of course, if each and every one of these warriors were loyal to the Order, even Vulcan would not have been able to fight them all at once.

However, they were just a bunch of people who cared about their own lives than the honor of their group. They were not a united bunch.

They were just a collection of sands. Vulcan had no reason to fear them.

“It's not like I'm a murderous maniac...”

‘Now that I have had my revenge, I have no reason to turn them all as my enemies.’

Vulcan utilized the power of spirit form and the Thunder God's Might and rushed toward Beloong City.

Nobody was thinking about stopping Vulcan.

He was already a being that lived in a different dimension from themselves.

Among the Order's ranks, there was not a single soul who had the courage to stop Vulcan.

In silence, they only gave blank stares at back of Vulcan as he charged toward the city.

# Chapter 46 - Putting An End To It (Part 3)

---

BOOM!

A side wall of the Denomination's holy temple was obliterated.

Dust powder from the crumbled stones rose up like clouds and blocked the view.

Vulcan roughly got rid of it all using a wind magic and looked inside the temple.

There was Bellon looking at Vulcan with an expressionless face.

The two servants that were usually around to do his bidding were nowhere to be found.

“Looks like you don't care that we are inside the city. Did you want to kill me that badly?”

“It looks like you were waiting for me.”

“That's right. I figured it would be a useless effort to try to run. I felt the battle when you and Ho-Gyoung were fighting.”

Bellon sighed and explained more.

“I didn’t think I’ll live forever, but looks like I’ll be going sooner than I thought.”

“Didn’t you live close to a thousand years? According to what I heard, you were here before Ho-Gyoung.”

“That’s right. However, I could have lived that long in the lower dimension as well. If I knew this was going to happen, I should have killed Sarantis and ran away to the lower dimension.”

So there was a way like that.

Vulcan looked at Bellon as if he was trying to ask why he didn’t.

“Kuku. When I heard the Order’s assassin squad did not return, I kept thinking... It can’t be, it can’t be... Still, I didn’t think you would grow so much in just two years. I never thought you would grow beyond Ultra-Zenith Rate in such a short amount of time and come back. There probably weren’t enough monsters for leveling up. I still don’t understand how you grew so much.”

As if he found it funny, Bellon was still laughing.

“It looks like you might be able to make The Six’s wish come true.”

“What is it that they want?”

What Bellon just said was out of blue.

However, Vulcan did not panic.

It was because Bellon was scratching the part that was itching for a long time.

‘I always felt The Six wanted something from me.’

The interest that the The Six, including Filder, showed to himself...

Vulcan remembered the way they talked, how they were acting like they were hoping Vulcan would go to Act 2.

Because The Six was not forcing Vulcan, he had it set aside as a distant memory. However, Bellon said something out of blue that was related to it.

Vulcan was quite intrigued.

However, Bellon shook his head.

“Well. It’s not like I’m one of The Six. It doesn’t feel right for me to tell you. Why don’t you go to Filder and ask yourself? He probably will tell you now.”

“ ... ”

“Also, it’s nothing big. It’s just a vicarious satisfaction for old people who have given up. In a way, they are bastards just like me.”

Having said this much, Bellon started to mumble to himself as he brushed his chin with his hand.

“Now that I think about it, even before you became Ultra-Zenith Rate, it seems you have had received many indirect advices from them. It must have been great to receive such high expectations from them. Hahaha!”

Bellon was laughing over it once more with a loud voice. Watching Bellon, Vulcan stood there without any words.

Bellon laughed for a while as if he had a psychological problem.

The temple was already half destroyed as it was. Now with Bellon laughing so loudly, it was shaking dangerously.

Vulcan was watching, wondering how long he would laugh, but Bellon suddenly stopped laughing.

With an expressionless face, he looked at Vulcan and said,

“I’m a worshipper of the God Powel, yet I had been hiding in fear



of battle all this time. Perhaps it's obvious I should be meeting a pathetic end like this."

"Are you done with what you wanted to say?"

"How did Ho-Gyoung die?"

"He died a painful death."

"That's not so bad."

Bellon raised his power as he smashed his two fists together.

His entire body started to turn blue as it grew in size.

"Also, I also feel great about how that bastard died before I have."

Perhaps it was because Ho-Gyoung was Bellon's sworn rival.

Even at this moment, when his life was in danger of coming to its end, Bellon was still conscious about Ho-Gyoung.

Meanwhile, Bellon's body didn't stop growing.

The change was unbelievable. It made Vulcan wonder how such a change was possible.

Vulcan stared at Bellon that kept on getting bigger.

‘Just how much bigger is he going to get?’

It was a ridiculous growth. It was over 5... 10 times the original size.

It was an incredible feat that Vulcan had never seen in other places. Watching it, Vulcan was impressed inside.

Even as Vulcan was thinking about such things, Bellon was not showing any signs of slowing down with his growth.

DUDUDUDUK.

Finally, his growth stopped.

He looked like he was made from pouring iron. He looked overwhelming.

He was about as big as usual giant monsters. Watching this, Vulcan was impressed.

Bellon didn't just grow in size.

His entire body was surrounded by unidentified semi-transparent

layer. It contained dangerous energy. If felt like an ordinary Zenith-Rate warrior of Asgard would be seriously hurt just from coming in contact with the layer.

‘It looks like an ordinary energy blade would not be enough to put even a scratch on it.’

Bellon looked like a high demon from some legend about gods.

However, it didn’t make Vulcan feel fearful or terrified.

Vulcan had the Heavenly Lightning Blade and SS Rank lightning mastery, two very powerful weapons.

Both in terms of power and speed, Vulcan was confident about neutralizing the opponent in either way.

Bellon became a 33 ft tall monster.

He was almost the size of a high rise building. He stared down at Vulcan.

“Can you fight me with all of your might? At least for the final moment, as a worshipper of Powel, I don’t want to be shameful.”

“All right.”

TSUPAT.

As soon as he finished his words, Vulcan went behind Bellon.

Surprised, Bellon quickly moved his hand toward the back.

However, with his stance compromised, there was no way his attack would be carrying proper power.

Vulcan created several dozens of Hellfires and shot them toward Bellon's hand.

BABABABOOM.

Although they were extremely powerful, well beyond comparison to how it was before the awakening, they were not able to inflict much damage.

It was because the semi-transparent layer demonstrated incredible defensive power.

However, it was enough to make Bellon lose balance, and that allowed Vulcan to carry out his next attacks with ease.

Thunder God's Strike.

Vulcan's lightning blade struck Bellon at a speed that even he, a

Ultra-Zenith-Rate warrior, could not respond to. The blade cut about half of Bellon's neck.

It was a critical attack, enough for Bellon to almost lose his life. The semi-transparent layer that surrounded Bellon disappeared. Vulcan swung his sword once more and cut off Bellon's head clean.

In a blink of an eye, Bellon's body and head were separated.

Bellon died with a panicked expression on his face. It was from when he panicked when Vulcan suddenly went behind him.

He was the strongest that ruled Beloong City for a long time. However, he was not powerful enough to handle Vulcan's full strength.

## KUAGUAGUANG

A boulder sized head fell, and the giant body made loud noise as it fell on its knees.

The temple was not able to withstand Bellon's weight. Its floor started to crack like a spider web.

Vulcan murmured as he looked around the broken temple.

"It felt great when Ho-Gyoung died, but it is just so-so with

Bellon's death.”

Could it be that his desire for vengeance was satisfied when he squashed Ho-Gyoung with overwhelming power?

Could it be that Vulcan thought the true enemy was just Ho-Gyoung?

He couldn't know for certain.

Well, it was no longer important to him anyway.

“I think I should go slay Sarantis.”

Sarantis was said to be in the furthest corner of the north gate field.

It was the reason Vulcan leveled up all this time while enduring all that hardship.

Cutting off Ho-Gyoung and Bellon's heads were not his final goals.

‘It's time to put an end to it all.’

In order to see the end of all this grunt work, Vulcan started to walk.

However, he stopped after only taking a few steps.

‘Ah, I should at least say goodbye to big brother and Mr. Jake.’

Now that he thought about it, Vulcan realized he rushed out without saying anything to them.

Back then, he acted on instinct. He was swept away by the awakening on lightning and flame magic. Now that his senses were returning slowly, he started to worry about them.

Although it was unlikely, there was the possibility of the remnants of the Order seeking revenge on Dokgo Hoo and Jake.

Vulcan thought it might be a little dangerous.

‘Since Ho-Gyoung died now, it wouldn’t matter to them... Still, I can’t know for sure, so maybe I should go back.’

Vulcan decided to go back the way he came and meet with Jake’s group.

He was worried, but even if that wasn’t the case, he still had to meet them.

It would be rude if Vulcan just left Act 1 without saying proper farewell to them.

Vulcan got through the rubbles of the temple and came out.

He was about to run toward the hidden location on the north gate field, but he could see familiar faces.

“Yo! Little brother! You totally destroyed them.”

“... I thought you were hot tempered at times... Still, I never thought it would be this much.”

“Big brother. Mr. Jake.”

Vulcan was glad to see them. He walked toward Dokgo Hoo and Jake.

Until this morning, for the past two years, Vulcan saw their faces to the point of getting sick of seeing them. However, now, for some reason, it felt like it had been a long while since he saw them last.

When Vulcan looked to the side, there were also Lee Jung-yup and Jang-ho. Vulcan looked at Jake and asked.

“By the way, how did you get here so fast? I wasted some time fighting Ho-Gyoung, but it would have been hard to get to Beloong city faster than I did.”

Jake looked at Vulcan as if he was trying to say Vulcan is an idiot.



“Did you hurt your head while fighting Ho-Gyoung and Bellon? You can get here at an instant by using the return scroll. Just why did you rush out like that for?”

“Ah...!”

“It all worked out because you have reached a new height that is far beyond what we thought. Still, if you were around the borderline height, with a foul luck, you could have been killed in middle of the hunting ground if you ran into a group of men from the Order!”

“You had no need to worry about that... It wasn’t that I was overconfident. I rushed out because I was absolutely sure of myself.”

“By the looks of how you are talking, it seems like you regained some of your senses.”

“So, little brother. From what I heard, you were even more thoughtless than I was, weren’t you? Causing a huge ruckus like this in middle of the city? Even I would have never imagined doing something like this! Hahaha!”

Dokgo Hoo smiled big refreshingly and patted Vulcan’s back hard.

Vulcan glared at Dokgo Hoo with a displeased look on his face,

but he could hear someone calling his name from the back.

“Yeah. I think so too.”

Vulcan turned his head and looked at the person that just called his name.

Folken, the captain of patrol, was looking at him with a smile on his face.

“Master, have you been well?”

Dokgo Hoo looked as if he suddenly turned into a well mannered child. Watching Dokgo Hoo, Folken made a face as if he just chewed on poop.

“You. That gives me goose bumps, so please stop that.”

“If I don’t call my master as master, how should I address...”

“Shut up. I was wrong. Just stay quiet for a bit.”

Folken and Dokgo Hoo exchanged chitchat.

Standing amongst them, Vulcan was trying hard to keep a fake smile on his face. Vulcan greeted awkwardly.

“... How do you do?”

“I’m well, but looks like you caused a big accident.”

With a friendly face, Folken came to Vulcan and patted his shoulder.

“It would be best if you followed me quietly, right?”

“... I guess so.”

The patrol was lenient when it came to incidents outside of the city, but for things inside the city, they dragged people away even if it was something small like picking a fight after having drinks.

Vulcan put his blade away to the sheath and quietly followed Folken.

Standing in middle of rubbles of the temple, Jake’s bunch just stood there with blank faces.

---

“... I didn’t know I’ll be coming here.”

It was a mysterious place with a wiki crystal that had a magnificent emerald tint.

They arrived at Filder’s pub. Folken sat at a random chair and said,

“Why? Were you thinking I’ll really arrest you?”

“You always dragged away people when they caused ruckus inside the city and almost beat them to death, so...”

Vulcan also picked a chair and attached his butt to the chair.

Vulcan brought out a beer bottle from his inventory and scanned Folken’s level.

He thought it will be possible now.

[Act 1 Manager Folken]

[899Lv]

‘... They had levels like these, so that’s why scan was not possible.’

Vulcan turned his head and looked at the table to the side.

By Filder’s discretion, the pub was not open today, so there were no customers.

Instead, there were The Six sitting quietly and watching Vulcan.

[Act 1 Manager Beruneru]

[921Lv]

[Act 1 Manager Logweed]

[876Lv]

[Act 1 Manager Haywood]

[900Lv]

[Act 1 Manager Meruham]

[899Lv]

‘They are all same. They are all monsters.’

Vulcan was currently at level 470.

Because his lightning mastery was increased to SS Rank, his true height was higher than the level, but even so, Vulcan could say he

was perhaps barely at level 700.

It looked like The Six would be counted among the top warriors even if they were at Act 2. Compared to them, Vulcan was still lacking in many ways.

‘And... Mr. Filder is...’

[Act 1 Head Manager Filder]

[999Lv]

‘He is the real monster.’

His level was just one below one thousand.

Vulcan was shocked inside, but Folken gave Vulcan a late reply.

Folken chugged beer. Refreshed, he said ‘kuuuaaa’ and put down the mug. He looked at Vulcan and said,

“I don’t know what you were thinking while you were following me, but there won’t be a beating to death or things like that, so don’t worry.”

“For managers of Act 1, the way you all were handling this here are quite shabby.”

“Now you realized it? We are actually like that. Other than squashing ones causing serious problems, we don’t have much to do. Anyway, it looks like you can see our titles and levels now.”

“Yes. I increased my specs quite a bit this time.”

“Kulkulkul. I can really see how much stronger you have gotten. This time, we will finally be able to see a human achieving something incredible.”

Beruneru entered the conversation as he laughed with his unique laughter.

Vulcan didn’t quite understand what Beruneru was talking about.

With a slightly crumpled face, he was about to ask a question to Beruneru, but Filder also jointed the conversation.

“Now, if it is something like Sarantis, it looks like you could defeat it easily.”

“...”

Vulcan looked at Filder in silence.

It felt like he knew what Filder was going to say.

‘By chance, he isn’t trying to force me to go up there, right?’

Filder had his gaze fixed steadily on Vulcan and said,

“Mr. Vulcan, instead of stopping here, how would you like to challenge Act 2?”



# Chapter 47 - Putting An End To It (Part 4)

---

Vulcan asked with a dumbfounded face.

“Isn't it the manager's responsibility to send people from Act 1 to Act 2?”

“That's not the case. In other cities, the managers usually do just enough to maintain order and help new arrivals adjust to the place. After all, this is a place that's hard for most people to even imagine.”

“In that case, Mr. Filder, why are you making such a proposition? Actually, not just you, but everyone seems to want me to clear Act 2.”

“You can think of that as me having some personal ambition.”

“Instead of beating around the bushes, please answer me properly.”

“Um... This could sound quite out of the blue.”

Instead of saying something, Vulcan steadily stared at Filder. Filder stared back at Vulcan with a smile as always. Filder explained the main point.

“We want to see someone who was born a human to rise up to the

godhood.”

“...?”

Vulcan could not understand Filder’s words.

Actually, it felt like it was more accurate to say it was not making him interested.

“That is, how could a human being become a god?”

“Why would that be impossible? Ah, it is true that no human being ever became one. However, if it is you, Mr. Vulcan, it should be very possible.”

“This is such a nonsense...”

“Kulkul. Why is it nonsense? Clearing Act 1 alone would be proving the strength rivaling that of demi-gods or enlightened beings. You are the rascal with the power to go straight to the enlightened world this instant if you wanted. So, to see that you are still living the life of an ordinary man...”

“...”

“Clearing Act 2 is an accomplishment that’s far beyond comparison to clearing just Act 1. Once you clear Act 2, you will earn the right to be a god, and it’s possible for you to officially have

your place amongst gods. Kulhulhul.”

Vulcan didn't say a word.

He couldn't think of anything to say.

To begin with, Vulcan had no interest in things like enlightened beings or the enlightened world. It was obvious why telling him about the title of being a god invoked no interest from him either.

Vulcan was still showing a disinterested face, but Filder continued.

Vulcan looked like a guy who just answered a telemarketer's call and was too nice of a man to just hang up. Instead, with a blank face, Vulcan listened to the story.

“I'm sure you already have guessed, but us Six were like you once. I was a single-minded man who obsessed over getting stronger and saw no value in anything else. I panicked when I first came to Asgard, but I had enough confidence in myself. Unlike residents of Act 1 who fell into despair or settle to live in this place, my talent never ran out like a spring that never went dry.”

“ ... ”

“Before we faced Act 2, we believed we could grow stronger without limits, powerful enough to face gods or demon lords.”

Having said this far, Filder took a sip from the tea.

He still had a smile on his face as always, but somehow, sadness could be felt from him.

“However, it was just a delusion. We had to face the reality eventually. We were painfully reminded that we were just humans after all like all others. Some people faced this fact in the lower dimensions, and some came to terms with in Act 1. To human beings, clearing Act 2 was like a door that was smaller than a needle hole.”

The beer that Vulcan brought out from the inventory had lost its carbonation, but Vulcan didn't touch it.

Before he realized, Vulcan was engaged in Filder's explanation. Vulcan pulled his chair closer.

“In the beginning, we gave it our all to polish and sharpen our abilities. Later on, we still did so out of habit with our minds emptied of thoughts. It was a very long time to endure, so long that it would have been impossible to live through while agonizing over the difficulties. A thousand years passed... and when another thousand years passed... when I no longer believed in useless thoughts, like I might be able to get through if we managed to take one more step further, I acknowledged it finally.”

With a dry gaze, Filder looked at Vulcan.

“I came to accept the fact that this is as far as I will be allowed to go.”

For a moment, he kept silent.

Vulcan was also engulfed in the serious atmosphere and fell into deep, hollow thoughts with a serious face.

Ever since he arrived at Asgard, Vulcan have heard so many of these laments and regrets from people.

He didn't criticize them for faulting their talents, but he never tried sympathizing or consoling them either. It was because there were too many of them to care for and express empathy toward in an individual basis.

However, it felt different to hear it from Filder, the one who reached the height that nobody else have in Beloong City. Because of this, although it may have been the same story, but the weight and significance of his words were different.

Without any fluctuations on his tone of voice, in a dry voice, Filder was letting it all out.

Vulcan could not even begin to fathom all of despair and anguish contained within his story.

“Kulkukul. Still, Filder is powerful enough to touch the wall at least. As for the rest of us including myself, we can’t even feel like we deserve to say that we wish we could...”

It was Beruneru that broke the silence.

It was difficult to believe a proud grand mage such as Beruneru just said such humble words, but Vulcan didn’t question it.

Instead, he asked what he was curious about since a while ago.

“This is something I was curious about since a while ago. I understand what you are saying, but then who are these beings that clears Act 2? Mr. Filder, elder Beruneru and others here with us... They all gave up on clearing Act 2, so just who... Now that I think about it, how did you come back to Act 1 from Act 2?”

“This rascal’s habit is acting up again. Fine, we will explain things starting with your first question. Kulhulhul.”

After scolding Vulcan for pouring out multiple questions at once, Beruneru started to explain.

Beloong City was one of ten starter cities in Asgard’s Act 1. In Beloong City, hardly anyone from other species could be seen, but it was different with other cities.

Because of large human population in other worlds, human beings also made up the majority of the population in Act 1. Still,

there were quite many of other species scattered about the Asgard. Also, when it came to the fraction of the population of each species that went to the Act 2, these other species had substantially higher fractions in comparison to human beings.

The difference in abilities came from the difference in species.

While countless number of people fell into despair in Act 1, demi-gods and higher beings went to Act 2 with high probabilities of success. Watching them made humans feel deprived.

Also, even The Six, the best and the most powerful in Beloong City, were not free from this limitation.

The Act 3 was a place that no human being had ever set foot on.

There was a wall that even Filder and Beruneru, the greatest talents the human race had to offer, could not reach.

However, the wall wasn't so high that even other species could not overcome.

“Well, I'm not at Filder's level, but I worked pretty hard at it as well. I would be counted as one of the few that tried hardest among all humans. Still... I was not able to match the abilities of those with lineage of god's... Kulkul.”

Beruneru said it as if didn't bother him, but his voice was tainted with a sense of defeat that could not be hidden.

‘To think that one must have not just talent but also the right lineage to barely clear it... This is just too cruel.’

Vulcan thought Beruneru looked even older than usual. Vulcan said,

“If that’s the case, you came back to Act 1 because...”

“We gave up on our hopeless dreams. Instead, we obtained a new one.”

Beruneru scratched his back with his rod and continued.

“Just like how we are, when there is someone not showing any progress despite pouring in wholehearted efforts and all of one’s time, there is a being that quietly comes to visit.”

“And who is that?”

“The Act 2’s manager.”

Vulcan gave a blank stare at Beruneru for a moment, but he regained his senses after looking at [Act 1 Manager Beruneru] floating on top of Beruneru.

‘It’s not like there’s a rule that says Act 2 can’t have one.’



“I see. Just like how all of you are trying to send me to Act 2, did this manager give a proposition to you as well?”

“That’s right. Your head is spinning for once. Kulhulhul. The Act 2’s manager promised us to give us clues on obtaining godhood for ten-thousand years of service as Act 1’s manager.”

“Ten-thousand years...”

“What? Does it seem like a long time to you? I can see how you would think that. You would be beating Act 1 in less than ten years, so from your perspective, our choices may look foolish.”

“No. I didn’t mean it that way.”

Watching Vulcan hurriedly explaining himself, Beruneru laughed and continued.

“Anyway, all of us, myself included, came to this place through that process. We are limited on things we are allowed to do, and there are a lot of bothersome things to do as well, but this is far better than the time in Act 2 where we roamed around hopelessly like ghosts. Also, in this place, there is a small task that we enjoy the most, so it is quite all right to be here.”

“Right. It’s quite all right here. Watching you and Dokgo Hoo, especially how you are at this very moment, I can definitely see why Filder and Beruneru said you are the only one that can do it.”

Heywood, the bearded man, suddenly joined the conversation.

“Although we gave up, we wanted to prove that a human being could also make it. To gods and other species, we wanted to show a human being achieving the godhood and clearing Act 2.”

“...”

“Even if that’s just a pathetic vicarious satisfaction.”

Heywood’s eyes were burning up.

Feeling uncomfortable because of heywood’s gaze, Vulcan quietly turned his head toward the back.

“When I first came to Beloong City, I thought I was the only one that thought about such things, but it turns out that was not the case. I asked the other five that arrived before I have. I asked why they choose Beloong City when there are ten cities to choose from. What do you think was the reason?”

Vulcan didn’t answer. As if Heywood was not expecting one, he continued right away.

“Beloong City is the only one that is made almost entirely of humans. They all came here with the goal of raising a human pupil to have the pupil achieve the godhood. Haha! It’s funny, don’t you

think? They gave up on Act 2 like a dog that lost the fight, but here they are trying to impose their dreams on other humans. It's a ridiculous idea."

Agitated, Heywood paused for a moment. With a little calmer voice, he added,

"I know this is ridiculous and meaningless. However... It's also true that we want to see one. We humans are ordinary beings. We don't have god's blood flowing in our veins. We are not blessed from birth like some species either. We want to see a human being, an ordinary existence, achieving godhood."

Vulcan couldn't say anything.

It wasn't that he had nothing to say.

Their proposition had nothing to do with Vulcan's situation. If he wanted to consider it as just a nonsense, he certainly could.

It appeared Vulcan had no need to worry about being pushed to do as they say by force.

He was not sure of the full extent of the limitations that The Six spoke of, but he have never seen The Six using excessive force on anything besides providing the residents with help and maintaining order.

"Mr. Vulcan."

“Filder.”

“We know that you don’t like our proposition. It’s not like it has a great noble cause that anyone would sympathize with. We are asking you just to fulfill our ambitions. Also, you are barely 30 years old. The way you think is probably completely different from old monsters that enjoyed all sorts of luxuries and pleasures that the lower dimensions had to offer.”

“...”

“This is why we think asking you to do this is quite an intrusion. Still, we can’t just sit back and not ask you either. You have the greatest potential among all humans... no, among all species.”

Unlike his usual self, Filder looked at Vulcan with burning eyes. Filder slowly started to talk again.

“For our sake... Could you please challenge Act 2?”

Vulcan closed his eyes.

It was not hard for Vulcan to understand how they were feeling.

They gave up on going to the enlightened world and chose to go to Act 2 instead to train. Although he won’t know the full extent of it, it was certain that their obsession toward becoming stronger

was beyond anyone's imagination.

Vulcan figured this must also mean that their sense of loss must be also beyond his imagination. It was no wonder why they wanted to satisfy their ambition even if it was through a vicarious mean.

‘Still, this has nothing to do with me.’

Back when Vulcan was just around the age where he should be enjoying his life, he was dragged to a strange world, and he had been living blood-splattering lifestyle for ten years.

As Filder said, it wasn't like Vulcan was a bored old existence that experienced all of the pleasures and good things that life had to offer. Vulcan could not afford to waste any more time on battles.

“I'm sorry.”

Actually, there was no reason for him to feel sorry about. Also, there was no reason for him to think so carefully before making a decision either.

However, it was difficult for Vulcan to say anything to them because he felt the tremendous weight of their sense of defeat.

An uncomfortable silence painted the scene again. On behalf of The Six, Filder spoke again.

## Chapter 48 - Putting An End To It (Part 5)

---

“So, it is a no after all. In that case, it cannot be helped.”

‘What?’

“It is too bad. We are disappointed, but since we can’t force you about this, we understand. Are you going to go slay Sarantis now?”

“Uh, yes. I was going to go say goodbye to others first, and...”

“I see. In that case, I guess this will be the last time.”

Filder raised his hand. It was out of the blue, so Vulcan awkwardly accepted his handshake. The rest of The Six each gave Vulcan a handshake.

“Hey rascal. Now that you are finally going back home, live well there, all right?”

“Kulhulhul... You will start to miss this place after living peacefully for about 200 years.”

“Of all people I have met, you are the best. It is disappointing, but please be happy in your home world.”

Folken, Beruneru and Meruham gave good words to Vulcan.

The atmosphere was far friendlier than Vulcan ever imagined. He put up an awkward expression on his face because of that, but still, he couldn't afford to inquire and say, 'just what do you have up on your sleeve?'

"Are you going to go now? It would be fine if you stayed a little while longer..."

"Ah, yes. I'll be going right away."

"I see. Afterall, farewells are better when it is shorter."

Filder said with a refreshing smile as always.

"Please have a safe journey back home."

"..."

Vulcan bowed properly and opened the pub's door.

A loud bump noise was heard as the pub's door closed.

Looking at the firmly closed door, Beruneru said,

"He left."

“He did.”

“Kulhulhul. Well, I figured he would not accept it right away, but it is too bad.”

Beruneru worked up his appetite and said again. On the other hand, Filder received Beruneru's words without a trace of disappointment on his face.

“Afterall, we all knew this was going to happen, didn't we? He isn't some old man that had enjoyed everything that life had to offer. He isn't someone obsessed with becoming stronger either. His choice was obvious.”

Filder swung his hand and used telekinesis. Various drinks and teas that were to The Six's likings were placed.

Logweed said,

“Well, I wonder how long it will take him. Well, I am sick of waiting, but...”

“Hm... Maybe 100 years will be enough?”

“Each dimension has different time frames, so I can't know for certain. If we have foul luck, we may have to wait several hundred years. If we are lucky, it could be just 10 years before he returns.”



“Well, whether it is before he dies or after the lower dimension disappears, someday, he will come back.”

“That’s right. As long as he doesn’t go to the enlightened world, that is. Still, I don’t think we will have to worry about that possibility at all.”

Filder said as he smiled.

“No matter how late, he will probably come back within five thousand years.”

---

Having left the pub, Vulcan cringed and mumbled.

“What the hell?”

Until just a moment ago, the atmosphere was not like this at all. The expressions on their faces were desperate. They were enough to make Vulcan worry that they might force him if he refused.

It was to the point Vulcan was wondering if he should use the Beast Transformation and Spirit Form together and run away.

However, on the contrary, they let Vulcan go in a clean manner.

When he looked back just before he left the pub, The Six all had peaceful expressions on their faces to send him off as if they practiced beforehand.

‘Do they have some kind of scheme?’

Vulcan agonized over it for a moment.

However, no matter how how hard he thought about it, there wasn’t anything strange that he could think of.

‘Ah, that’s right. I decided to not think too hard about things to such convoluted details.’

Vulcan shook his head very hard. He emptied his thoughts and walked toward Jake’s residence.

When he opened the door, as expected, there were Jake and Dokgo Hoo greeting him. It wasn’t just them. There were also Lee Jung-yup and Jang Ho waiting for him.

“Oh, you got out of there so fast!”

“Huhu. Looks like the master went easy on you.”

“Please cut the nonsense.”

Vulcan dove into the sofa as if he was being sucked into it. He said as he looked at Dokgo Hoo.

“I’ll be leaving this place now.

“Is that so?”

“Um.”

“... Already.”

Dokgo Hoo received Vulcan’s words as if it wasn’t hard to accept it.

In the contrary, it was Lee Jung-yup and Jang Ho who were more agitated.

‘Could it be because they were tied to the Beloong City for a long time?’

Vulcan couldn’t tell. He didn’t actually want to know either.

“After all, it looks like you have become extremely powerful. I don’t think I will be a match against you. I always thought you were like a fiend since the first time I saw you, but you really are a crazy bastard. Kuhahahaha!”

“You certainly are incredible. Everyone that I have invested in eventually graduated, but... You are the first one to grow so fast.”

The atmosphere suddenly turned into full out flattery toward Vulcan. It was making him blush, so he changed the subject to the Order of Virtue.

“Anyway. What will happen to the Order of Virtue and the Holy Denomination of War? It doesn’t matter to me since I’ll be leaving, but what about you, Big Brother? Will there be something like them attempting to seek revenge against you?”

Lee Jung-yup, the one who was keeping silence until now, explained.

“That probably won’t happen. There’s hardly anyone that knew about the bad-blood between you and Bellon. The Denomination will probably continue with another as the leader.”

“Hm.”

“As for the Order of Virtue... All of the people that had bad-blood with you were its core figures, so the Order is in quite a chaos right now. They are lacking focus at the moment. Since everyone that hated you or Dokgo Hoo are dead, everything will be fine once Ho-Gwang is dead.”

“Looks like you are about to go kill Ho-Gwang any minute.”

“That’s obvious. Since you started on your vengeance spree, you should see through it to the end.”

Vulcan looked at Lee Jung-yup directly.

The expression on Lee Jung-yup looked very confident. It looked like he had the whole battle against Ho-Gwang already planned out.

‘In the end, is he the one that is the happiest in this situation?’

It looked like Lee Jung-yup also had quite a few followers. It looked like he could take over the Order if he wanted.

Vulcan didn’t like that about him.

It was true that he helped Vulcan, but Lee Jung-yup’s first impression was not that great, and even now, Vulcan and Lee Jung-yup were not in great terms either.

It was just a temporary joining of forces with a common goal.

‘Also, I won’t know for certain, but... In middle of all this, he may have worked his scheme somehow.’

There was no proof.

It could be that Vulcan was thinking about such things because Lee Jung-yup was such an eyesore to him. Still, it felt like it would frustrate Vulcan to no end if he left things as it was.

Vulcan stood up from the sofa abruptly. He took steps to walk to the front of Lee Jung-yup and said to him,

“Lee Jung-yup.”

“Huh?”

BAAM!

“Kuurrc!”

“What the hell! What are you doing?”

Lee Jung-yup’s chin was struck by Vulcan’s fist. Lee Jung-yup’s head tilted up toward the sky.

After seeing three of his teeth flying off, Vulcan felt so much better. The frustration he felt inside was relieved.

Vulcan turned his head and looked at Jang Ho once and redirected his gaze again to lock it on Lee Jung-yup.

Shivering in fear, Lee Jung-yup looked at Vulcan. With a confused face, Lee Jung-yup asked Vulcan,

“W... Why?”

“It’s just that you are an eyesore.”

It was too much of a bother for Vulcan to explain every little detail. Instead, he threw him a question.

“You have something you have done wrong to me, don’t you?”

“ ... ”

Lee Jung-yup glared at Vulcan without saying a word.

Looking at the expression on his face was not enough to figure out if Lee Jung-yup was hiding something or not.

“Well, if you don’t want to tell me, that’s fine. Let’s just say it is now all even with the punch I just gave you.”

“... All right.”

‘This runt. Looks like there really was something.’

Vulcan retrieved his gaze away from Lee Jung-yup. Now, Vulcan started talking to Dokgo Hoo, the one who was laughing on the side.

“Big Brother.”

“Yeah?”

- It's possible Lee Jung-yup could do something shady, so please always be careful.

Hearing the telepathic message all of sudden made Dokgo Hoo's eyes open wide.

- What is it. Is he scheming something?

- It's just that he is a real eyesore. I could never tell what he is thinking too.

- That's true.

Dokgo Hoo cringed for a moment. However, he broke into a big laughter again and slapped Vulcan's back loudly.

“Haha. I'll take care of my own business, so, Little Brother, you do what you need to do.”

“Well, I guess that's true.”

Afterall, Dokgo Hoo have lived for a much longer time than Vulcan. Although Dokgo Hoo looked like a simple man, he lived as a mountain bandit for several decades. Vulcan figured Dokgo Hoo will be able to handle things on his own.



Vulcan looked at Jake.

It just occurred to him that Jake was the very first person that he ran into first in Asgard.

“Anyway, it looks like everything was concluded well, so I’ll be going now.”

“All right. By the way, give me all of the items you found in the Underground Graveyard before you go.”

“Ah, right.”

It was as expected of a merchant. He was meticulous.

Vulcan opened the inventory and handed over the items that he didn’t have the chance to give until now.

Afterall, they were items he won’t be needing once he returned to Earth. He poured everything to the floor except the best equipment he currently had on. Looking at the items made the tips of Jake’s mouth to tilt up.

Jake smiled as he gathered the items.

After collecting the very last item, he brought out a human-sized item from his inventory.

It was sparkling magnificently.

It was gold.

“Huhu. Huhuhu.”

“You like it that much?”

“Of course. How could anybody not like gold?”

“People that don't care for gold are all here. It's useless in a place like Beloong City.”

“That's why I'll put it to a good use. Looks like I won't have to worry about money ever again once I return home.”

It was a perfect give and take.

Vulcan, excited and happy, placed the lump of gold in his inventory.

With a somewhat awkward face, he put forth his hand to shake Jake's hand.

“Thank you for all of your help until now.”

“Well, instead of calling it help, it would be right to say we had a

clean trade.”

“Is that the case?”

“That’s right. I profited a lot from it, and you gained everything you wanted in the process as well.”

“Anyhow, still, thank you. I can’t think of anything in particular to say in this kind of instance.”

“All right. Live well when you return to your home world.”

Vulcan and Jake exchanged a firm handshake.

Having said his very last farewell, Vulcan looked back for the last time as he opened the door.

“Everyone, please take care.”

Jake and Dokgo Hoo waved their hands to say farewell.

Vulcan closed the door.

“Phew...”

After leaving Jake’s residence, Vulcan, out of nostalgia, watched Beloong City’s streets.

He was here for close to six years in this city. He was sick of the place, but now that he was about to leave the place, in a corner of his mind, he felt like he was going to miss this place just a little.

Like that, Vulcan watched the streets for a few more minutes. It was right around when he made up his mind and started to walk.

There was a man that was approaching toward Vulcan.

“Vulcan.”

“... Uruo.”

It was the most unexpected.

Vulcan went straight to the point.

“I don’t think the things between us ended very well. Did you come here to see me?”

“How did you become so strong?”

“ ... ”

Uruo went straight to the point faster than Vulcan.

When Vulcan just stood there without saying anything, Uruo asked again.

“I know we have bad-bloods. Still... If you are going to leave Act 1, that means all connections you have to this place will be gone. As a Player... If you could give me one last advice, I’ll be grateful for the rest of my life.”

At first, Vulcan thought this was ridiculous. He also was getting annoyed a little. However, in the end, he could understand Uruo a little. Vulcan thought it was strange that he could, but he did nevertheless.

‘Could it be that he was so desperate?’

Excluding Vulcan, among all Players, Uruo was a figure who was overwhelmingly stronger than others. He would be losing face if he sought advice from someone that was ahead of him or some other places.

Vulcan steadily fixed his gaze on Uruo.

Vulcan was still annoyed a little, but Uruo was someone that Vulcan would never have to see again after this.

Out of whim, Vulcan decided to be generous to Uruo.

“Go beg Beruneru for a whole day and ask him to teach you the traditional magic, starting with the basics. If you are lucky... you

might be able to gain something.”

Having said it, Vulcan was just about to walk past Uruo, but he turned around. Vulcan punched Uruo on the pit of the stomach.

“Kuuk. Kuurk!”

“You are an eyesore just like him, so let’s call it even with this.”

Vulcan said to Uruo who was suffering in pain. Vulcan turned around.

Pazizizik

Vulcan activated the Thunder God's Might and quickly got out through the north gate.

## Chapter 49 - Putting An End To It (Part 6)

---

The deepest corner of the north gate field was a place where even the most renowned warriors in Beloong City did not dare to approach.

A terrifying existence lived in this place. Even violent monsters like Hellgoats ran from this place.

Having arrived at Sarantis' area, Vulcan took a deep breath.

“Phewa...”

It wasn't that he was scared of Sarantis.

It was obvious this monster was weaker than Ho-Gyeong or Bellon.

Because of that, it was going to be hard for Vulcan to get nervous in the first place.

Vulcan was just excited a little because he was only a step away from achieving what he wants.

Vulcan organized his mind and called Sarantis.

“Come out you bastard!”



KUOOOOO.

KUGUGUGUGU.

It was a roar. It was louder than several tens of beasts combined. Along with the roar, a gigantic lifeform appeared through the ground.

The landscape was completely flat until now, but now, there was a small mountain added to the scenery.

Vulcan thought the following.

‘Although I called for it like that, it really did show up.’

When Rogweed explained it all to Vulcan before, Vulcan didn’t believe it, but Sarantis really did appear when Vulcan called for it using those exact words.

Vulcan was speechless.

Vulcan used magic to sweep away the dust clouds.

He did it because he was curious about how Sarantis looked like. This was going to be the last monster he was going to hunt before leaving Asgard. He wanted to see it.

As soon as the dust clouds were swept away, unfortunately, Vulcan regretted his decision.

Its body looked like a lump of random human flesh.

It was a strange one. It had several hundred teeth, and it had tentacles and human legs and arms stuck here and there at random.

The body's middle portion was the best.

It had a gigantic mouth that was overflowing with blood. It looked as if it was cut wide open with a blade.

When the mouth opened, there were several hundred eyeballs inside.

[Sarantis, the King of Beloong City]

[520Lv]

“Ugh... Ugh...”

At an instant, all of those eyeballs focused their gazes to Vulcan. Right after that, the eyeballs started to burst, and small insect like

things were born out of the popped eyeballs.

Having watched this far, Vulcan could not take it anymore.

“Ugh! It’s disgusting!”

Using all of his power to manage his mana, Vulcan generated several hundred Lightning spears.

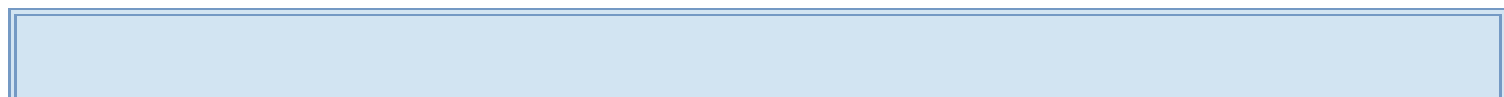
The Lightning spears were launched at Sarantis. The barrage was like a machine gun fire.

In light of continuous bombardment, a very powerful attack far beyond what’s expected from anyone from Act 1, Sarantis was not able to get a handle of the situation.

KUUUUUHHHH.

There were several thousands of tentacles on its body, and there were also unidentified monsters being poured out from its mouth. Those things did their best, but their best was useless.

Vulcan didn’t leave any gap in his attacks. He continuously launched Lightning spears and Hellfires. He also cast the Firefield on the ground. In light of their combined power, Sarantis ended up losing its life.



[Your experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

[Main Quest – Defeat Sarantis, the Act 1's Boss Monster. Success!]

[Reward – Please tell me your wish.]

“Hugh.... Hugh...”

Vulcan used excess amount of mana in a very short period of time. He had a difficult time breathing.

‘There was no need to waste so much mana.’

Because it was a disgusting sight, it was too difficult for Vulcan to watch anymore. Vulcan was quite agitated during the start of the battle.

By the time Vulcan's breathing became normal, Sarantis' dead body was gone. An item appeared in its place, and the item was exuding bright light.

“Oh, I guess it gave a skillbook because it was the final boss.”

A skillbook had a very low chance of being dropped after slaying a monster. Vulcan felt great to see one.

Although it was going to be useless when he goes back to Earth, it still felt great.

Vulcan bent over to pick up the skillbook and read it.

[Legendary skill – Lightning Dragon Step]

[Level Limit: 450]

Step technique. It enables the user to move fast like a lightning. Just like a lightning dragon that is short tempered and hates losing, the technique is advantageous during attacks.

Traveling speed increased 15% when attacking.

Traveling speed increased 5% when evading.

“Oh, it’s a really nice skill.”

‘Why couldn’t this show up when I really needed it?’

Vulcan complained inside, but it wasn’t like he was going to just

abandon it either.

For the moment, Vulcan was like a child trying out a new toy. He tried out the Lightning Dragon Step. While he was in middle of this, a white blur appeared out of thin air.

It looked semi-transparent like a person's spirit. It looked like something out of a TV show or movie.

There was an old man that looked like he came out of a fairy tale. The old man was staring down at Vulcan.

“Let's see... Are you the one who will be making a wish... What the?”

The old man gave off the impression of a mountain spirit. The old man looked at Vulcan with his eyes narrowed.

“What the? Aren't you too strong to be in Act 1? Wait? Perhaps not? It looks like you are somewhat weak if I looked at just your physical abilities. Oh my... I may not be good at other things, but I'm good at figuring out one's strength. Still, you are a curious case.”

The mountain spirit mumbled, still wondering about Vulcan's strength and abilities. Watching the old man, Vulcan thought,

‘Is it because I didn't level up much due to the SYSTEM?’

Vulcan's true height far exceeded Act 1's standard. However, Vulcan was lacking in experience points. Because of this, Vulcan had not leveled up much. It looked like the old man was confused because of this difference in Vulcan's level and strength.

Vulcan checked to see if the SYSTEM's scan ability worked on the mountain spirit.

[Act 1 Manager. God Spirit Baek Ja-gyeong]

[770Lv]

‘It does work.’

Baek Ja-gyeong still looked confused. Vulcan said to Baek Ja-gyeong,

“Excuse me. May I tell you my wish?”

“What? Ah, yes. That's why I was summoned. It's been a while since I was summoned last time. Gosh.”

Baek Ja-gyeong excused himself for a moment, and he continued with a stern face.

“Before you tell me your wish, I’ll tell you a few warnings. I can’t just grant you anything you want. First, a wish related to time will not work. A wish like ‘turn the time back to when I was a child,’ or ‘send me back to the past’ will not work. Even gods can’t make those kinds of wishes come true. If you want a time related wish, you will need to clear Act 2 or higher.”

Listening to the rapid-fire explanation coming from the old man, Vulcan sighed in disappointment.

“Also, you can’t ask me to kill a god or a demon lord. I don’t have abilities for that. Moreover, it is forbidden to make a wish about having someone killed. Finally, you can’t ask me to grant you a hundred wishes or something like that. It’s obvious. You understand that, right?”

“...”

“And one more thing. If you choose to go to the Enlightened World or Act 2, you can still make a wish. So, you don’t have to worry about losing the opportunity to make a wish. If you want to go to the Enlightened World or Act 2, you can go. Is there anything else you are curious about?”

Vulcan raised his hand up like a polite student and asked.

“Excuse me. You said a wish related to time will not work... If you could take me back 10 years... No, if you could take me back 5 years in the world I originally came from...”



“No. I can transport you through space, but transporting you through time like that is not something I can do. It will take the highest god to grant you that wish. It will have to be a wish after clearing Act 2 at least.”

Vulcan raised his hands and grabbed his head.

Although he knew all along that it won't work, now that all hope for the time travel was gone, he didn't feel great.

It had been 10 years since Vulcan started to live in these strange worlds.

Of course, 10 years was not going to sever his family ties, but still, it was going to be difficult for Vulcan to just go back to life like nothing had happened when 10 years have gone by.

Vulcan was agonizing over this. Watching Vulcan acting like this, Baek Ja-gyeong said,

“By any chance, is your wish going to be about wanting to go back to your original world?”

“... Yes. It's just that I have been in this world for so long. That's making me worried about my families.”

“Hm. In that case, wait for a moment.”

Baek Ja-gyeong brought out a crystal orb from his sleeve and asked Vulcan.

“What’s the name of the world you use to live in?”

“It’s called Earth.”

“Earth... Earth... By any chance, were you in other worlds besides Earth and Asgard?”

“Ah, yes. I was in a place called Rubel Continent as well.”

“Hm... Wait for a moment.”

With Vulcan standing there with a dumbfounded face, Baek Ja-gyeong operated the crystal orb.

He fiddled with the orb like someone typing on a keyboard. After fiddling with the orb for a while, the old man said with a brightened face,

“This is good. The time ratio is very advantageous for you.”

“Pardon?”

“How long have you spent in the Rubel Continent and Asgard?”

“It’s about five years each.”

“Five years... That would be... Wait, did you just say five years?”

In disbelief, Baek Ja-gyeong asked with a look on his face.

“In Asgard... You spent only five years?”

“Yes.”

Vulcan asked nonchalantly.

With everything Baek Ja-gyeong said before this, Vulcan was being filled with expectations again about something good, but Baek Ja-gyeong was going off the tangent. Vulcan was getting annoyed.

However, to the old man, this was more important.

“Oh my... By any chance, instead of being a human, are you a demi-god?”

The old man carefully observed Vulcan.

“Well, you are not a demi-god. I don’t sense the holy aura that’s distinct to demi-gods.”

“Can you please tell me what you were about to say about the time ratio?”

“Ah, right. Sorry. It’s just that I was really surprised.”

Baek Ja-gyeong apologized promptly and continued.

“Starting with the bottom line, only two years have passed in Earth.”

“Pardon?”

“The time passes at a different rate in each dimension. Asgard and Rubel Continent have similar rate. On the other hand, Earth’s time is slower than those dimensions. Approximately, five years in Asgard is about one year in Earth. It seems like you were worried that your families might have died, but it looks like you have no reason to worry so much. It’s been only two years.”

Vulcan cheered as soon as Baek Ja-gyeong finished his explanation.

With this, the thing he was so concerned about, the passage of time, was resolved. It would’ve been odd if Vulcan didn’t cheer.

Out of joy, Vulcan shook his body for a moment. Afterwards, Vulcan thanked the old man,

“Thank you for telling me such information.”

“Well, you would have learned about it anyway when you arrived there, so there is no need to thank me.”

Baek Ja-gyeong responded as if it was no big deal. He asked Vulcan,

“So, is your wish going to be about transporting you through dimensions and sending you to a place called Earth?”

“That’s right. If possible, it would be even better if you could please send me to a place called South Korea.”

“Hm. It won’t be hard. However, it’s too bad. You are a talent that cleared Act 1 in just five years. With a talent like that, you might be able to become the first human ever to obtain the godhood...”

“...”

“Well. Godly spirit or god, regardless of what it is, if you don’t want it, it cannot be helped. I understand. I’ll grant your wish.”

Baek Ja-gyeong recited an unknown spell for about ten seconds.

Lights of various colors exuded from his right hand. When Baek Ja-gyeong pointed at Vulcan’s head with his hand, the stream of

light entered Vulcan's head from the top.

“You certainly will have a business to come back... When you change your mind, come back to this place.”

Having finished his last words, Baek Ja-gyeong became smokes and disappeared.

Vulcan was now alone. He checked the notification window.

[Legendary Skill – Cross-dimensional Teleportation]

[Level Limit: None]

\*You can teleport to dimensions you have been before.  
Cooling time: One year.

“... Instead of a one-way ticket, he gave me a round trip ticket.”

Vulcan thought Baek Ja-gyeong must be also hoping Vulcan would go to Act 2.

Regardless, it was not a big concern. In fact, it was actually better.

Vulcan could go back to Earth now. That fact remained the same. Considering the time ratio between Earth and Asgard, Vulcan figured he could afford to visit Asgard once in a while even if the cooling time was one year in his time.

‘I should come to visit either Mr. Jake or big bro.’

Vulcan activated the Cross-dimensional Teleportation.

Energy of golden light exuded from the top of his head. After about a minute had passed, the aura surrounded his entire body and made Vulcan look like a golden statue.

‘I’m finally going home. It was tough.’

Vulcan was more excited than a kid on the day before a fieldtrip. With that feeling in his chest, Vulcan smiled.

PIC!

With a sound of a fuse breaking, Vulcan, who was shining with blindingly bright light, disappeared without a trace.

The place was empty as if there was nothing there in the first place.

Lonely wind blowing across the field took the place instead.

Like that, Vulcan completely disappeared from Beloong City.

---

There were empty tables.

It was a place where an emerald colored crystal pillar shined with its mystic light.

There were two people sitting inside the Beloong City's pub.

Of the two, Filder said with a serious voice,

“I thought it would take 100 years at least...”

“ ... ”

The other one didn't say a word.

His eyes were filled with a bit of sorrow, but the eyes were not lifeless.

Filder continued,

“Did... something happen?”

“Yes. Filder, could you give me a bottle of beer?”

Filder brought him beer.



Without a word, Vulcan drank the entire bottle at once. He looked like he was drinking it out of frustration. Vulcan put the bottle down on the table.

“It’s been five years. Actually, I wanted to come here sooner.”

“For what reason?”

Filder looked at Vulcan. Filder looked worried.

Toward Filder, Vulcan said with a dry tone.

“The Earth has come to an end.”

# Chapter 50 - A Brave Hero From Another World

---

Without any words, Filder fell into a deep thought.

Filder was not acting too surprised after hearing what Vulcan told him. Watching Filder, Vulcan said,

“You are not surprised.”

“...”

“I was a little curious. I was curious why you allowed me to leave so easily when I told you I’ll be leaving Asgard last time. I thought you would insist that I should stay. On the contrary, you gave up so easily.”

Vulcan’s gaze contained some suspicion.

Vulcan continued.

“... By any chance, did you know things will turn out like this?”

“No. I really did not know. Please. I would appreciate it if you didn’t get me wrong.”

Unlike the usual, Filder was not smiling. Filder excused himself.

“The following is what we were thinking. In the lower dimension, a hundred years, or several hundred years if it takes longer, is long enough time to enjoy every pleasure that life has to offer. By then, all of the family members would have passed away one by one as well. So, in the end, it would feel like you are left all alone in the world.”

“Hm...”

“We figured you would come back by then. Because we were so certain of this, we just thought it would be easier if we waited instead. We knew that the Cross-dimensional travel technique is given to those who wish for a way to go back to their own worlds. That’s why.”

Vulcan believed Filder’s words.

It wasn’t because Filder’s explanation was logical. It was because he trusted the man. So, Vulcan went over this without doubting it too much.

Vulcan sat there in silence for a moment.

Filder continued.

“Earth... I heard that it was a place with a highly advanced civilization. Also, because of that, I heard that a war in that world could lead to complete destruction of that world, but it doesn’t

seem like a war was the cause of its end. Based on what you said... If I am to make a guess... Was it because of an invasion by the forces led by a Demon Lord?”

“That’s right. It sounds like it happened to places other than just Earth.”

“As I thought... Those beings usually target worlds that are not protected by a god. They also target worlds where their gods are not in their full strengths because of injuries. Earth is a place without a god, demi-god, or not even a hero... It would have been a good target for them.”

Filder said with a cringed face.

“I think a more detailed explanation is necessary. Will you please tell me more?”

“... I will.”

Vulcan sighed and started to explain.

---

It felt like his body was gone and only his consciousness was floating around through the infinite space.

In the space between dimensions, Vulcan drifted around like a ghost ship.

After a while, all of sudden, it felt like he was being sucked into a

specific place. Vulcan finally realized he will be arriving to Earth soon. He couldn't hide his excitement.

Although only two years passed in Earth, ten years have passed in Vulcan's time. He was returning home after a long hard journey.

It was obvious he was excited.

Like that, time passed for a while with Vulcan in excitement. Finally, Vulcan was at Earth. He got to set his foot on South Korea's land.

“Um?”

Having set foot on the ground, Vulcan crumpled his face.

It was because the scenery was completely different from what he imagined.

Vulcan was thinking about a busy city or a mountain area full of lush trees.

Before he arrived, he was concerned people might think he look odd, so he was going to leave the area as soon as he arrived. However, now that he actually arrived, he just looked around with a vacant look on his face.

There were half-destroyed buildings.

There were molten and broken pieces of irons on the rubbles of buildings. It was a horrible sight.

There were destroyed roads, and remains of cars and broken glass were scattered about the scene.

“What is this?”

Vulcan couldn't get a hold of his mind.

“By any chance, was there a war against the North Korea?”

The scene was completely unexpected.

Vulcan panicked. Only plausible explanation that Vulcan could think of was a pre-emptive strike by North Korea.

He was not considering the possibilities of natural disasters such as a hurricane or earthquake, because the level of damage was too extreme.

Vulcan used his superior eyesight to look further, but to the end of his visual range, the land was filled with destruction. It was endless.

It was a tragic sight that could be brought about only by a war.

‘For now, I’ll have to go find out what happened here.’

Vulcan left the area and started to run.

After all, there wasn’t any modern day weapon that could hurt him.

Vulcan figured that he would run into people and intact cities, if he ran around aimlessly far enough in any direction.

It was right about when Vulcan was going to activate the Thunder God’s might.

Vulcan felt the presence of a few approaching him.

“What? There are people still here?”

“...”

Vulcan was about to put up a welcoming look on his face. He thought they were people.

However, what appeared before him was not a human being.

It had bloody red skin and two horns on its head. It had a tail with an arrow-like end.

It was a muscular looking monster.

It looked like a demon commonly portrayed in western culture. Having witnessed the lifeform, Vulcan was at a loss for words.

[Demon Force Belake, Captain of Nine]

[37Lv]

‘What is this... Isn’t this place supposed to be Earth?’

Vulcan was not able to say anything. Belake said to Vulcan who was lost in his thoughts,

“Hey. Tell me. Why did you come all the way here by yourself? Are you here to get yourself killed on purpose?”

“Kukuk Kakakakak!”

“Kukakaka!”

When Captain Belake finished talking, other smaller demons started to laugh in their unpleasant voices.



With a blank look on his face, Vulcan observed them.

[Demon Force Grunt Hum]

[19Lv]

[Demon Force Grunt Kiru]

[21Lv]

...

[Demon Force Grunt Hudura]

[18Lv]

Overall, they were a little stronger than an ordinary orc.

However, that was not the point here.

Vulcan finally came back to Earth, his home, after long years of hardship.

The problem was that there were strange beings that should not be in this world. These beings were roaming about the street. That was the problem.

‘This place is definitely Earth.’

The words written on broken signs on the ground were Korean.

This was Earth. There were no other possibilities.

‘In that case, how come those monsters, the kind that should be in places like Rubel Continent, are here?’

Also, what happened to the people that lived here?

What about my family and friends? Are they alive?

Just what happened in two years while I was gone...’

“Hey. Human. Did you not hear me? Are you deaf?”

Toward Vulcan, who was deep in futile thoughts, Belake said with a hardened look on his face.

It looked like he was displeased about his words being ignored.

Because he was a demon, Belake was able to communicate and

converse with any intelligent being. It was a trait unique to demons. Despite that, he was not getting a response.

Belake raised his giant trident and aimed it toward Vulcan's chest.

“Human. Answer. This is your last chance. What business do you have? Why did you come all the way over here?”

“Kukikikikic. Captain. Why do you bother asking? You are going to kill him anyway!”

“Let's kill him already! Blood! I want to see blood!”

“Kukaka. It's human meat!”

It seemed the grunts were expecting a bloodbath festival soon. The grunts were already running around wild in celebration.

Vulcan looked at them with annoyed eyes.

Their laughs were annoyingly loud. Their voices were very unpleasant for a human being's ear to listen to.

Vulcan said to the demons.

“Would you be quiet for a sec.”

“... This human must be mentally ill. Kuhahahahaha!”

Having heard what Vulcan just said, Belake laughed out loud.

Belake laughed for a long while with his head tilted all the way up.

He suddenly stopped laughing and looked at Vulcan.

There was a thick vein popping out of his forehead. It looked like Belake was mad all the way to the tip of his head.

“I’ll give you the most painful death, human.”

Belake stabbed Vulcan’s thigh with the trident.

Wheec.

Tung.

“Kuk. What’s this?”

In light of a completely unexpected outcome, Belake opened his eyes wide.

He was expecting Vulcan to be pierced by his trident and scream in pain. However, instead, Belake's hand was hurting from the impact.

Belake looked at his hand, and then he looked at Vulcan, who was standing there peacefully as if nothing happened.

“This bastard. Just what did you do... We are done messing around! It's time to get serious!”

Belake took three steps back. With all of his strength, he charged at Vulcan with his trident.

With its violent momentum, Belake charged toward with his trident aimed at Vulcan's chest.

‘He probably blocked the last attack somehow using a trick. However, it will be different this time.

I'm counted as one of the strongest of captains.’

Belake firmly believed that the trident was going to more than just pierce through Vulcan's heart.

KUWANG.

“Kuaaak!”

KUDANGTANGTANG.

“Huk... Captain is...!”

“Our captain was attacked!”

By the reaction from the impact that was far greater than the last one, Belake was tossed back to the distance. Having witnessed this, the smaller demons strained their eyes.

They didn't have any abilities to determine what happened exactly.

However, it seemed certain to them that this human used some kind of weird trick and attacked their captain.

“Let's go! Let's kill him!”

Nine small demons surrounded Vulcan in a circle. They all charged toward Vulcan at once with their weapons.

Blades, swords, maces, and etc. They were using all sorts of weapons to pound at Vulcan.

KANG! KANG!

TANG!

KANG!

With excitement, the small demons beat Vulcan who was not resisting at all.

Meanwhile, Vulcan leisurely watched what the small demons were doing. That's all he did for the time being.

Vulcan's passive skill, 'Iron body', was at rank A even in Asgard's lofty standard.

If he used Rubel Continent or Earth's standard, it was at rank SS, an unbelievable mastery rate.

Also, the difference in level was humongous.

Even when he was at level 99, he could just let orcs or goblins attack him and let them beat him without taking any damage. He could do that while yawning.

Now, he was at level 471, and his true power rivaled that of demi-gods. To Vulcan, who developed such strength, their attack didn't even tickle.

Clank!

KAGANG!

“Ugh.... This....!”

“My blade is broken!”

“What is this? This human! He’s weird!”

In the end, their weapons broke.

The small demons panicked and didn’t know what to do. Vulcan quietly looked around the small demons and started to cast magic.

It had been a while since Vulcan cast this magic. Infinite Flame Orbs made their entrance.

Infinite Flame Orbs were launched toward the small demons. It left no time for them to react, and the orbs made direct impacts.

BOOM!

KUGWAGWAGWANG!

[Experience points went up by an extremely small amount.]

[Experience points went up by an extremely small amount.]



The small demons exploded. There were no traces of them left.

That was not the end of it.

Infinite Flame Orbs' powers were not exhausted from exploding the small demons.

Each orb created a crater that was almost 200 ft in diameter.

Each orb had destructive power that rivaled a Hellfire cast by an ordinary mage in a lower dimension.

Even Vulcan was a little shocked by the outcome of the magic he cast.

'I didn't really feel it until now because I was in Asgard all this time, but it looks like I really did get a lot stronger. Looks like I'll have to be careful.'

In comparison to the lower dimensions, everything was tougher in Asgard, not just people there, but even the ground or rocks.

After seeing the ground suffering bigger destructions than he anticipated, Vulcan made up his mind to be careful about controlling his strength.

Step... Step...

Vulcan slowly approached Belake who was lying on the ground.

He got close enough to just kick him. Now that he observed Belake from a close distance, Vulcan realized Belake had his jaw dropped. It appeared he was in a state of shock after watching the power of Vulcan's magic.

With a voice that had his fury suppressed, Vulcan said,

“Hey.”

“Huk. Y... Yes!”

Belake was shivering in fear.

The confident look that he had a while ago left the scene without any trace. He looked that scared.

Vulcan said very slowly so even Belake in his state could understand.

“I just arrived in this dimension called Earth. I heard that only humans lived in this dimension. Who are your kind? How did you get here? Also, what is the purpose of your invasion to human world? Tell me what you know. Also, tell me who is your leader.”

“T... That is...”

“If you tell me willingly, I’ll spare your life. However, if I sense that you are lying, or if you choose to keep your mouth shut, then...”

Vulcan focused flame energy to the tip of his finger and pointed it toward a building that was mostly in ruins.

The magic power gradually increased its concentration.

A powerful energy, enough to make Belake shake in fear, was launched toward the building, and it melted away.

“...!”

“I don’t have time for this, so hurry up.”

Vulcan was keeping his voice down. It seemed like he was suppressing his emotion as much as he could.

However, Belake could tell that there was unimaginable fury hidden behind it.

It was no longer about wanting to live.

It was just that Belake was overcome by the huge difference in strength. He was overwhelmed by the pressure. It felt like he had no other choice but to speak in this situation.

Belake even had forgotten about the fear toward Amarus, his leader. He was about to speak.

At that moment, Vulcan felt someone was flying toward him. Vulcan looked toward the sky.

There was a giant monster falling rapidly toward him from the sky.

It was a muscular demon with horns bigger than a fully grown human being.

The demon arrived before Vulcan and Belake. The demon asked,

“What’s this? I came because there was a large explosion here, but it’s just a human. Hey. You. What are you doing here?”

The being was harshly scolding Belake.

Vulcan examined its abilities.

[Demon Force Naramhart, Captain of 999]

[86Lv]

“T... The thing is!”

Naramhart stared at Belake, who was about to make excuses.

Vulcan moved his position to right between Belake and Naramhart.

Naramhart had an unpleasant look on his face with one of his eyebrows moving. Naramhart was about to say something, but Vulcan stepped up and said,

“If you are a captain of 999 soldiers, then you must know a lot more than a captain of 9.”

Having heard what Vulcan just said, Naramhart gave a look. It looked like he was thinking this was ridiculous. Naramhart said,

“Hey, kid. Where did you learn to butt in to other’s conversation?”

The tone of his voice was like how an adult would scold a little kid that didn’t know anything about how the world works.

Vulcan didn’t bother to talk back. Instead, he focused his mana.

At an instant, he created ten Hellfires and had them float in the air, but soon he realized his mistake and canceled nine of them.

‘I need to keep him alive at least, if I want to find out what happened here.’

As he made a grinding noise with his teeth, Vulcan steadily glared at Naramhart.

# Chapter 51 - A Brave Hero From Another World (Part 2)

---

BOOM!

“Kuaaac!”

Without any strength left in him, Naramhart collapsed to the ground.

He wanted to get up, but it was not possible. His legs were gone without a trace.

That wasn't all. The blade attacks that followed right after have sliced off his arms.

In disbelief, Naramhart stared at Vulcan.

‘This is... Just what the...!’

Naramhart was so shocked by Vulcan's incredible abilities that it was to the point of making Naramhart forget about the pain. Naramhart was not able to hide how shocked he was.

‘He is fighting me, a captain of 999, yet he is taking it so easy...’

Of course, even Naramhart knew that he wasn't invincible

against all humans. Usually, in comparison to a continent's strongest human, Naramhart had a few shortcomings.

However, in other words, it also meant Naramhart was not someone who would lose so easily in a fight against even the strongest in a continent.

Now, Naramhart was facing Vulcan, a man who could toy with him effortlessly as if he was just a bug. Looking at Vulcan's emotionless face, Naramhart felt the chill flowing down on his back despite his entire body feeling hot from the pain.

'This could be almost... equal or greater than the supreme commander... No, this definitely is!'

Naramhart's face was starting to get saturated with despair.

Vulcan took slow steps toward Naramhart and came right up to his face.

Vulcan's eyes were calm and cold.

It was giving Naramhart the creeps. However, he tried not to let it be shown.

Vulcan said to him,

"Tell me. What are you? Why are you here? How did you get



here? Finally, who is your leader?”

With his mouth firmly shut, Naramhart ignored Vulcan.

Naramhart had a strong resolve becoming of a captain of 999.

However, Vulcan didn't care.

Vulcan collected mana with his left hand and said in a dry tone,

“I see you that are not talking.”

“...”

“The opportunity to use it came like this. Let's go ahead and see who will win.”

Having finished talking, Vulcan placed his palm on the top of Naramhart's head.

“Kuaaaac! Kuk! Kuhuwwuk!”

Naramhart struggled in pain.

He couldn't move much because he was missing arms and legs. However, his scream alone was enough to make one realize how painful it must be.

Looking at Naramhart, who was shaking, Vulcan thought,

‘To think I would be using this torture technique I learned from Lee Jung-yup.’

It was a technique that Vulcan learned for fun while he was in the Underground Graveyard.

Vulcan actually used the technique with mana instead of internal energy typically used by Murim’s warriors, but the effect was still quite splendid.

Only a moment ago, Naramhart was keeping his silence out of royalty for his leader, and he managed to do so despite having all of his arms and legs chopped off.

However, as soon as he regained his senses from the torture, he started to blabbermouth about all sorts of facts, even ones that Vulcan didn’t ask about. Watching it made Vulcan feel satisfied.

Having heard all information that he wanted to hear, Vulcan used Hellfire and cleansed Naramhart from existence.

Afterwards, Vulcan went to awake Belake, who had been unconscious since before the start of the battle. Vulcan asked Belake the same questions and compared his answers to what Naramhart gave. Of course, it was not even necessary to torture Belake.

A wide variety of information poured out of his mouth.

“Korean peninsula has been already destroyed. I heard there are resistances left in a few places in other continents... As for the survivors in Korean peninsula... They are gathered in an underground prison located in south side. We are in the process of deciding what to do with them...”

“Yes. Yes. It’s probably a place that is called Busan by the people that live here.”

“And you don’t know what happened to the people who had been living near Seoul?”

“That’s right! I was not among the first wave of invasion force. I was sent here as an additional deployment after this place was conquered to some extent, so...”

“I got it.”

Puk.

[Experience points went up by an extremely small amount.]

Belake’s head was cracked open like a water melon.

Vulcan didn't even glance at Belake's dead body collapsing to the ground. Vulcan stood up immediately and invoked the Thunder God's might.

Having transformed in to the Lightning's spirit, Vulcan charged forward in full speed.

The destination was the place that two demons mentioned.

It was Busan.

---

KUA KUA KUA KUA KUANG.

Vulcan charged straight toward Busan. Nothing could get in his way.

Quite literally, nothing could.

Regardless of what came in front of his path, Vulcan didn't care.

Even if it was a high-rise building that was blocking his path, Vulcan just bulldozed his way through the building.

It wasn't like Vulcan was going to get hurt from doing so, and it wasn't like there was going to be any collateral damage to anyone around the area.

If Vulcan went around the buildings and structures, he would have lost speed in the process. Vulcan didn't like the idea.

So, instead, Vulcan charged forward in maximum speed that way, and eventually, he arrived at Busan.

“... Is that the place?”

There was an entrance that looked like it was purposely made for an underground space, and there were countless demons lurking around the area.

The place definitely was the place that Belake and Naramhart spoke of.

Vulcan was about to rush in, but he stopped for a moment. It was because a thought just crossed his mind.

‘If my family is in there...’

Actually, Vulcan was about half given up on his hope about his family being alive.

It was because he heard that Seoul was the place that the demon force came to conquer first.

His family lived in Gwang-myung City, just south of Seoul. Because of this, assuming their survival was an excessively

optimistic idea.

However, although that was true, he could not ignore the possibility of his family being alive.

‘If I cause a havoc here... It could endanger the people inside.’

Vulcan finished agonizing over it and moved quickly.

Although Vulcan didn’t know how to move in stealth, he knew how to move extremely fast.

It was at a speed that demons could not notice that he just passed by.

Vulcan, who infiltrated the underground prison in an instant, stopped in front of a gate inside the underground.

He could feel breathing of countless people just beyond the gate.

“What...”

[Gatekeeper Pokuru]

[50Lv]

Phuk.

Thump.

[Experience points went up by an extremely small amount.]

Leaving behind the gatekeeper that died before being able to finish his sentence, Vulcan stepped inside.

‘There are a lot of people here.’

There were people trapped in groups of 100 to 200 people.

Judging from the long stretch of corridor, it appeared that there were several hundred rooms.

When Vulcan slowly walked through, a demon in the corridor screamed after seeing Vulcan.

Until a moment ago, the demon was laughing in joy as he tore apart a human being’s corpse.

“What! An intru...”

BOOM.

BOOM BABA BOOM.

Thump.

Thump.

...

Thump.

[Experience points went up by an extremely small amount.]

In a blink of an eye, Vulcan cast Infinite Flame Orbs and eliminated all guards.

When Vulcan lightly swung his blade, a prison room’s metal bars were cut as if they were straws.

“Huk!”

“Is it a rescue?”

“We are saved! Oh, Jesus!”



People in the room, who were in horrible shapes, cheered loudly.

Vulcan looked at the people who were full of excitements.

He was looking for someone he could ask to get more accurate information, but he could feel numerous footsteps approaching this way.

“Hey look! There is an intruder here!”

“What the? But it’s just one human!”

“Idiot! Do you think we would have missed it if there were many? He managed to get this far because he is alone!”

“Is that so? Even so, it is odd that he is alone.”

Small demons rambled on.

A seven-foot tall demon swung his fist at the head of one of small demons.

PUK.

Watching the skull and brain fluid being sprayed apart, the small demons fell to silence.

“Didn’t you see the dead bodies of guards and the gatekeeper? He is an incredibly powerful one!”

“B... But... I heard that there isn’t any powerful beings on Earth. I heard we only need to watch out for their weapons...”

PUK.

The larger demon also exploded the other small demon and said,

“One of you go ask the commander to come.”

“Y... Yes!”

After a salute, a small demon rushed to go find the commander.

The larger demon, who was looking at the direction of the small demon running, turned his gaze and looked at Vulcan.

After a smile, he said,

“I know you are a pretty powerful bastard. However, now that you are in here, you are just a rat in a poisoooooooooooo!”

A flame was ignited in the area where the demons stood.

Inside a flame made of five Firefields overlapped, Koros, the demon force captain of 99 and several tens of small demons became ashes and disappeared.

‘If I stand guard at this entrance, I think I’ll be able to slay them all without causing any casualties to people.’

Toward Vulcan, who just finished this thought, there were forces of demon swarming toward Vulcan like a wave.

Vulcan shouted toward them in exhilarating voice,

“Come!”

“Kiiiiaaac!”

“Kill him! Kill that human!”

Demons came at Vulcan like endless swarm of cockroaches.

Although they were all fearlessly charging toward Vulcan as if they were all hypnotized, it was not a bad situation for Vulcan.

It was because, for Vulcan, they were not even worth as a snack after a meal.

Vulcan had been fighting against monsters with level 400 or

above for a long time.

On the other hand, their average level was 20, and there were demons with level 50 to 70 occasionally. Vulcan could more than handle a million of these demons.

‘If I keep up this seemingly endless slaughter, a big one that could end the situation... did show up.’

The aura alone was different from other demons.

It was a ten-feet tall giant, and its head was a red tinted skull.

It somehow felt like this one could have a trick or two up its sleeves, so Vulcan gulped and checked its abilities.

[Demon force adjunct Hokera]

[122Lv]

“You dared and made me come here... Struggle in hopelessness... andooooooooooooough!”

“What’s this? It’s still just a small fry.”

By the Hellfire that was lightly tossed out by Vulcan, who had his face completely crumpled, Hokera was extinguished from existence.

In other lower dimensions, even the ones that were called the strongest knights or mages broke cold sweats against Hokera. Against Hokera, even those warriors were busy with securing means of escapes. However, against Vulcan, even Hokera was no match.

It wasn't that Hokera was weak.

It was just that Vulcan's level was 470, and his true power was far beyond what his level indicated. Vulcan was a cheat-like existence.

Vulcan mumbled as he crumpled his face,

“I think this place won't be safe unless I smashed up the one in charge of demon force in Korea.”

Watching the demon forces still coming at him in endless waves, Vulcan's eyes beamed with light.

---

“Kuuuarc!”

KU GU GUNG...

It was an existence with its entire body made of hard stone-like materials.

He was the warden of this prison, and it was the high-demon that was in command of all demons in Korean peninsula.

Although it displayed might that was on a whole another level from the other demons that came before him, even this one was on his knees in front of Vulcan in less than 10 seconds.

[Demon Force Commander, Count Burubelmong]

[202Lv]

“It is I... Burubelmong... the warden of this prison... yet you.... So easily... Kuuurrrc!”

By Vulcan’s flame magic, Burubelmong met his end before being able to finish his last words.

[Experience points went up.]

“He said he was the warden. So, I guess that means there won’t be anyone coming to threaten this place for a while.”

Burubelmong melt away inside a terrifying heat. Vulcan enjoyed the sight for a moment and turned his gaze away.

He could see people staring at him with expressions on their faces. They looked like they all lost their minds from watching it all.

Their jaws were dropped for so long that it was to the point that their jaws might actually pop.

Vulcan slowly walked toward them.

“I have something I want to ask.”

“Huk! Ah, yes!”

Vulcan approached a middle-aged man.

The man panicked, but it looked like he had more backbones than others. The man promptly collected his composure and responded.

The middle-aged man looked at Vulcan with a curious look, wondering what it was that Vulcan wanted to ask. Meanwhile, Vulcan took a deep breath to ask the questions.

To ask the question right away, the weight of the question was too heavy.

The one that he wanted to ask the most was also the one he was

most afraid of asking.

Pessimistic thoughts constantly came to Vulcan's mind. Because of it, he kept on hesitating from asking the question.

However, regardless of what the answer was going to be, it was something that already had happened. It was actually a stupid thing to do to hesitate like this here.

Looking straight into the middle-aged man's eyes, Vulcan asked,

“One year ago... When the demon force started their invasion on Earth, I heard that the first place they arrived was Seoul.”

“Pardon? Yes... That's right.”

“In that case, the people that used to live in Seoul... Also, other people that lived around the capital... Is there anything you know about what happened to those people?”

The middle-aged man's face darkened instantly.

Watching the man's hardened face, Vulcan felt his heart sink.

Having guessed what the man was going to say next, Vulcan prepared his heart for the terrible news.



“Since you are asking about that... You must be from another world just like these monsters have. They... It would be correct to assume that there isn't any survivors among the people that used to live in Seoul and Gyeong-gi sector.”

“...”

“They didn't have the chance to prepare for it... It was only after the situation in Korea that the humanity started to prepare against the invasion, so...”

Vulcan quietly closed his eyes.

Vulcan wanted to ask if he was telling the truths or lies, but Vulcan didn't. It was because the man had no reason to lie.

Vulcan lowered his head.

Strangely, there were no tears coming out.

He looked like someone who knew from the beginning that things would turnout like this.

‘What should I do now...’

A few dozen thoughts crossed his mind.

‘What was the point of all that hardship I endured in Rubel Continent? Clearing Act 1 and making a wish to come back to Earth... What was it all for... If an ending like this was waiting for me...’

“...”

‘Wait.’

Vulcan quickly turned his head.

“The Cross-dimensional teleportation technique!”

Vulcan murmured in a loud voice.

His head, which was frozen solid from hopelessness, started to spin again.

This was not the end.

‘If I used the Cross-dimensional teleportation technique, go back to Asgard and cleared Act 2... If I used the wish from Act 2, which can grant the kind of wishes that are impossible for Act 1...!’

Having thought this far, Vulcan woke up from his deep thoughts. There were sounds of steps by a humongous lifeform approaching. The steps were shaking the entire area.

Vulcan turned his head and looked around the people. He could see that they were all in state of panic.

“N... No!”

“That monster is... We are done for!”

“I thought we might be able to live, but in the end...”

“What is it? This sound... Is it about the sound?”

Vulcan asked the middle-aged man.

He had a look of despair, but still, he was calmer than others. The man said,

“There is only that bastard that could make this kind of noise from mere steps. It’s the leader of the demon forces...”

“The leader?”

“Damn it! Which bastard killed so many of my subordinates!”

It was an incredibly loud voice. It was loud enough to hurt the ears of people who already had them plugged with their hands.

To the ears of people shaking in fear, his voice could be heard

again,

“Come out, now! If you come out quietly, I will kill you painlessly in an instant. If you don’t, you will die while struggling in pain that’s beyond this world!”

‘If I stayed here, I think everyone in the prison might die too.’

Vulcan, following what he heard, quietly came up to the surface.

The demon was taller than a 30-story tall building.

He had a broad shoulder and carried fearsome looking gigantic sword. He looked quite deadly.

By the looks of him, he looked about as powerful as Folken or Beruneru.

‘Why is he so confident? What level is he?’

Vulcan used the SYSTEM and checked the opponent’s level.

# Chapter 52 - A Brave Hero From Another World (Part 3)

---

[Demon Force Supreme Commander, Count Nukuham]

[457Lv]

Vulcan's eyes narrowed.

He rubbed his eyes and looked again. He was wondering if he didn't see it correctly.

However, nothing changed.

Vulcan shook his head lightly.

'Lee Jung-yup... No, this bastard is not even at Jang-ho's height.'

Vulcan was caught off guard by his humongous height, but fortunately, he figured out Nukuham's true strength now at least.

Count Nukuham taunted Vulcan in a loud voice,

"Kuhahaha! You dared to cause a ruckus like this! You must be out of your mind. Do you have several lives?"

“ ... ”

“These people are sacrifices for the demon lord. I can’t afford to lose them! Shall we go to a different place!”

Nukuham raised his hand toward Vulcan, and an invisible force grabbed hold of Vulcan.

Along with Nukuham’s shouting, Vulcan was tossed to the distance.

However, it didn’t do any damage to Vulcan.

Actually, going to a different place was what Vulcan wanted, so he chose to get tossed to a far-far distance.

Wheec!

Crash!

Vulcan, who was still flying, collided with a building and stopped.

He dusted off himself and came out of the rubbles. He looked around the area.

Let alone any people, there weren't even any small demons that were so common when he was on his way to Busan.

Vulcan nodded.

Watching him, Nukuham was impressed. Nukuham said,

“Huh! You withstood my telekinesis. You are quite the sturdy one.”

“...”

“According to the investigation, this world doesn't have a god or any powerful warriors. I don't understand why someone like you exist in this place. However, it is very intriguing.”

Nukuham examined Vulcan as if he was a magnificent horse.

He made a proposal that was most unexpected.

“Hey, you. Why don't you join our demon force?”

“What?”

Vulcan had a look on his face that said he found Nukuham's proposition to be ridiculous. Meanwhile, Nukuham didn't care and continued.

“That’s right. It would be a waste for an existence like you to be stuck in a backward planet like this. You possess the strength to bring down demons with nobility titles. Your potential! I like it.”

“ ... ”

“Instead of letting your talent to rot in a place like this, how about you start a second life as a royal servant of our great demon lord Marahamka?”

Vulcan shook his head left and right.

Vulcan figured Nakuham must be out of his mind.

‘He is facing an opponent he met for the first time today, and he is trying to scout me?’

Vulcan broke in to laughter. He felt like he was shooting a film for some war stories straight out of the book, Romance of the Three Kingdoms.

Noticing Vulcan’s laugh, Nukuham crumpled his face.

“Such insolence. Did you just laugh from what I said?”

“That’s right. Were you thinking it would make common sense for me to accept a proposition like that?”



“You wretch... You are just a human. I was thinking highly of you for having developed such a strength. For that, I was thinking about taking you under my wings, yet...!”

As if he got angry, his body, which was black, started to turn red in some places.

It was like red hot lava flowing through a black field.

Even those from Beloong City, the ones who were pretty powerful, would have been nervous watching Nukuham’s overwhelming appearance. However, Vulcan just looked at him. Vulcan stood there with not a thing out of order.

Vulcan said,

“Just shut up and fight.”

“... You wretch!”

Count Nukuham was infuriated.

With a dignified expression on his face, Nukuham raised his left hand and pointed it to Vulcan.

“I was being generous and giving you one last chance, yet you dared to toss it away. There won’t be any more generosity!”

As soon as he finished talking, Nukuham's entire body was engulfed in a red layer.

It was an aura that was unique to high nobility demons. It was the kind that was enough to make any living being feel overcome by an ominous sensation. However, it was not threatening Vulcan in any way.

Vulcan, who was watching Nukuham with an expressionless face, used magic to fly up.

'If I stayed on the ground, he might shatter the entire Korean peninsula with his sword.'

Although the country was already in ruins, Vulcan didn't want to see it destroyed any further.

Vulcan, who rose to Nukuham's eye level, said,

"I said just shut up and fight."

"You bastard! I'll turn you into dust!"

Nukuham, who looked like a giant volcano, swung his giant sword in a violent motion.

He swung it down as if he was beating on a firewood. His

swinging motion contained fury.

A violent intensity could be felt from his swing. It felt like a direct impact would make Vulcan turn into dusts, not just get cut.

Clank!

However, Nukuham's attack was stopped easily.

Vulcan, with an uninterested face, raised his Heavenly Lightning Blade, and Nukuham's giant sword, which was being swung down with a force that felt like it could squash anything in its path, was stopped mid-air. It was unbelievable.

Nukuham opened his eyes wide and looked at Vulcan.

Vulcan could see Nukuham's face. His face looked like he just witnessed something impossible. He looked shocked.

"I... I'm going to use my true power this time! Obliterating Demon Sword!"

Nukuham, who talked like a cheesy villain from an old Murim fantasy novel, swung down his sword once again.

The swing was a lot faster and more powerful than the last one.

However, the end result was the same.

Clank!

“... This cannot be!”

Nukuham’s face solidified like an ancient Rome’s statue.

Like a man in denial, he repeated those words over and over.

“... This cannot be...”

From a common sense stand point, it was indeed a situation that did not make any sense.

Nukuham’s 20-story tall sword was blocked by a blade that was barely over three feet long.

It was like stopping a log with a toothpick. It was not normal.

On top of that, the one that attacked with the giant sword was none other than Count Nukuham, a renowned demon.

In 500 long years, there was not a single human that blocked his attack. Also, he believed that there will never be one.

However...!

‘To think.... Something like this could happen...!’

Nukuham, finally having realized the seriousness of the situation, slowly retracted his sword.

His face was already filled with fear. His confidence, which was overflowing only a moment ago, had shriveled to a size of a bean.

Nukuham would not have felt so cornered mentally if Vulcan, a tiny human being, showed even a little sign of being tired.

If Vulcan made any grunting noise or his stance faltered, if there was a small chance of victory, Nukuham would have bravely swung his sword again.

However, Vulcan looked like he had so much strength to spare despite fighting against all of Nukuham’s might.

‘It feels overwhelming like... Facing the duke!’

Having thought this far, Nukuham started to put strength in his feet so he could escape.

He figured that, no matter how strong Vulcan was, considering the difference in height, Vulcan would not be able to catch up to him.

However, there wasn't any chance of escape to begin with.

In silence, Vulcan cast Ifrit's Fist. He opened his left hand and put the palm side toward the front.

"... This is!"

Ifrit's Fist was flying toward Nukuham in a diagonal path toward the sky.

Watching an object that contained more mana than anything he have ever seen in his entire life, Nukuham thought,

'This is... Impossible...!'

BOOOOOOOOOM.

[Experience points went up.]

Vulcan placed his blade back to its sheath and enjoyed the scene that he just created.

Nukuham's upper body was gone as if it had been erased clean using an eraser.

Watching Nukuham's lower half falling like a giant mountain, Vulcan thought,

‘You were not even worth much experience points. You are nothing but talk just like Ho-gwang. Actually, you are worse.’

Vulcan watched Nukuham's dead body for a while and picked up an item. Noticing that it is a junk item, Vulcan cringed as he turned his body toward Busan.

‘For now, I should talk more with the survivors and come up with a plan.’

Vulcan needed one year anyway before he could use the Cross-dimensional teleportation technique again.

He had to think about what to do until then.

He also had a reason to think about what to do when he goes back to Asgard.

He felt the need to take time and think about those things.

‘To take time and think about the plans for the future... I need information. I need to eliminate remaining demons as well.’

Vulcan quickly returned to the underground prison and was reunited with the survivors.

Like that, Vulcan became a ray of hope to humanity that was only waiting for its doom.

---

“... After that. I spent most of my time obliterating remaining demon force. Once I cleaned up powerful captains and high ranking nobility class demons that were difficult to deal with Earth’s weaponry, the resistance handled the rest on their own pretty well. Like that, I did manage to put an end to the situation.”

“However...”

“That’s right. That didn’t bring back my dead family. It didn’t bring back the destroyed civilization either...”

Instead of the usual beer, Vulcan chugged on hard liquor and continued,

“On top of that, I think the invasion is not over. Don’t you think so too?”

“... You are right.”

Vulcan looked at Filder as if he was asking Filder to explain more.

Filder said,

“Most demon lords invade one of human worlds for the purpose



of sucking the planet's energy and growing their demon force. However, if they expect too much casualty on their side, they don't invade in the first place. Unfortunately... In this case with Earth, because they already invested troops there..."

"..."

"There is a high probability that they will send more troops because they don't want to let the destroyed troops to go to waste. Since Earth's only real power is you alone... They will probably send someone who is powerful enough to fight you, such as a duke.... Or the demon lord himself might come. Although it might take time."

The two didn't say anything for a moment.

Vulcan was busy thinking about the ramifications of what Filder just said. Filder was waiting quietly for Vulcan because he wanted to be understanding of Vulcan's situation.

It was Vulcan who broke the silence first. Vulcan continued with an emotionless face.

"In the end, it looks like I'll have to go to Act 2 for sure now. I need to do it in order to bring back my family and Earth's destroyed civilization. I also need to go there to gain the power necessary to fight the demon force that will invade soon."

"That's right. A demon lord's power rivals that of a god..."

Although his power will weaken a little when he crosses over into the human world, he will be still as powerful as me. I don't know about it much, but..."

Filder agreed with Vulcan's words.

Although Vulcan ended up going to Act 2 as Filder wished, the situation was not something that was making Filder feel all that great about.

Vulcan wasn't going to Act 2 because he wanted to. He was going in order to overcome unspeakable disaster.

Filder was too much of a good man to be happy about the situation.

'Although this is not like I cursed you... but I feel frustrated.'

Although Filder didn't have to feel responsible for what happened, Filder's heart felt heavy for some reason.

Because of this, Filder decided to actively support Vulcan and provide him with everything he could that may help Vulcan in clearing Act 2.

'I was going to do that anyway, but...'

He decided to be even more supportive than what he planned on

doing before.

Also, he figured that he was not the only one that would feel this way.

The other members of The Six were beings that have not lost their humanity despite the weight of incredibly long passage of time that they endured.

They could not be called saints, but they were far from evil.

If they heard about the misfortune that Vulcan was facing, Filder was sure that they would lend all the support that they possibly could within the allowed limits.

‘... Now that I think about it, Mr. Beruneru is a necromancer that came to Asgard after destroying his own world.’

Although that was the case, he became nicer.

Also, he thought of Vulcan as his own prodigy student. Filder was certain that Beruneru would pour Vulcan with every support he could possibly give.

Having thought this far, Filder thought about what he could provide for Vulcan.

Magic, swordsmanship, his specialty potion...

Filder's face stiffened.

Now that he thought about it, Filder realized there was not much he could provide for Vulcan.

‘There is nothing more that I could give to Vulcan about combat.’

Although The Six were at substantially higher height than Vulcan, Vulcan already paved his own path in combat style.

Also, since Vulcan had the synergy of his natural born talent and SYSTEM, there was no need to worry about Vulcan running in to a wall he cannot overcome. It was pointless to teach him anything more.

Still, it felt like it would not be enough if Filder just sent Vulcan on his way to Act 2 after giving him a load of specialty potions.

‘Is there anything else I can give him?’

Filder's worry deepened. It was at that moment.

Vulcan, who was keeping silence, said,

“Mr. Filder. I need your help. Also, I need the help of all of The Six.”

“Yes. Of course. The moment you came to Beloong City, I decided to provide with the best support I could provide.”

“In that case, I’ll ask freely.”

Having heard what Vulcan said, Filder tilted his head to a side. He looked dumbfounded.

“If it is about information about Act 2... Haven’t I told you most of it before? If there is anything you have forgotten, I could tell you again, but...”

“No. They were valuable information. However, from a Player’s perspective, they were not perfect. I would like to gather and organize information that are useful for a Player and then challenge Act 2.”

Vulcan emptied the hard liquor bottle on the table.

As he looked at Filder’s eyes, Vulcan added,

“Let’s try making a guidebook for Act 2.”

# Chapter 53 - Guidebook

---

While waiting for the Cross-dimensional teleportation technique's cooling time to pass, Vulcan have thought about many things.

There were all sorts of trivial, random and useless thoughts swimming around inside his head, but there was one thought that he was most serious about.

‘What should I do to adapt well to Act 2?’

Vulcan thought about what was the hardest part in adapting to Act 1.

There were so many that he couldn't count them all with his fingers.

Thinking back about the beginning, the one thing that he felt lacking the most at the beginning was...

‘There was hardly any information.’

It was just like this when he first fell to Rubel Continent. When he first arrived at Asgard, he was clueless.

Back when he was at level 99, there was a time when Vulcan roamed around the city aimlessly without any information or

preparation.

Thinking back now, Vulcan realized just how dangerous it was at that time.

He was fortunate. He received help from people like Filder, Beruneru and Jake, and thanks to that, he was able to spend his early days in safety. If they were not there...

‘I don’t even want to think about it.’

It was very possible that Vulcan would be still roaming around the hunting ground relying on SYSTEM only. It was also possible that Vulcan would have been dead by now.

Because of the experience, Vulcan felt that it was absolutely necessary to make a solid preparation before going to Act 2.

It was to conquer Act 2 more quickly while being safer and more efficient.

‘I’m going to gather up as much information as possible... and make a guide book.’

It was like playing an RPG game. Playing one without any information resulted in many errors and mistakes throughout the game. It could lead to increased game play time, and it also could cause the player to die in the game several times.

However, with a great guide book, even a first timer could enjoy it like a veteran.

Vulcan decided to think of Act 2 as a game.

He was about to go play a virtual reality game called Act 2.

For that, he needed a guide book that was made specifically for a Player like himself.

‘I’m going to collect all information, even trivial things, and make a useful guide book.’

Escaping from his trivial thoughts, Vulcan begged Heywood.

“Didn’t you say you were the last one to arrive in Asgard?”

“You rascal! Even so, it has been 700 years. How could I remember it all!”

“Even so... You know less than Mr. Filder who came 2000 years ago. Don’t you think that’s too much?”

“To begin with, I’m the type that doesn’t care much about what’s happening around me! I was busy training, so why would I have been strolling around to gather information?”



Looking at Heywood complaining, Vulcan shook his head.

‘I’ll have to just trust Filder and Beruneru.’

Filder was the type that trained alone, but he remembered lots of things.

As for Beruneru, while he was in Act 2, he had achieved new heights by networking with various mages there, so he had a lot of information about Act 2.

So, Vulcan organized valuable information based on the stories the two have told him.

Things like approximate map of Act 2 world, locations of hunting grounds and their difficulties, location of the city, type of beings common in Act 2, dangerous beings, etc....

On top of these, Vulcan also asked them to tell him about areas that they felt were strange or suspicious.

“Hey rascal. Why are you bothering with trying to enter a place like that? Instead of trying to gain experiences there, go to this place. It is a lot easier and safer.”

“You never know. It could be different if a Player went there.”

Even if it was a dungeon that was useless to normal people, it could be a different story for a Player.

‘You never know? It could be a hidden quest’s location, and it might have yet another Legendary reward.’

It was a good idea to mark all places with potential rewards.

Like that, Vulcan pestered The Six for about a week and gathered information.

At first, everyone was glad that Vulcan was working hard preparing himself for Act 2. However, when Vulcan kept on asking if they knew anything else, when they have told him everything, they were not sure about what to do to with Vulcan. Eventually, Heywood, a hot-tempered man, yelled at Vulcan. He had been pestering The Six that much.

“Hey! I’m telling you! I told you everything! It was as if I used a spoon and scraped everything out of my head and presented them to you in a silver platter, so enough! Actually, there isn’t any city out there with managers like us that would gather so much information for people!”

Only by this time, Vulcan finally stopped pestering The Six. Since then, Vulcan had been organizing the information.

The information were recollection of memories from 700 to 2000 years ago. There were a lot of useless information that were better

off left in a garbage can. However, having collected them all, there were quite a lot of useful information.

In particular, Vulcan wanted to avoid unnecessary quarrels. With the information gathered, Vulcan got to know in detail about dangerous beings and races that he should avoid. This was a great achievement.

‘Dragonians are arrogant, but I’ll be fine as long as I don’t pick a fight with them... As for demi-gods, they are good natured by default, but they tend to care too much about others. Human race is the most untrustworthy beings. Vanhell City is full of battle maniacs... so I better stay clear of that place.’

After that, Vulcan selected areas that he would be most active in.

Act 2 was significantly wider and complex, so there was an elevated risk of wondering around aimlessly and growing inefficiently if one fell to Act 2 without any information.

According to Filder, there actually was one who have wasted time away from staying in a place that didn’t match.

‘I cannot let that happen.’

Vulcan made plans. He started to erase areas that he had no business with, and he checked the areas that would be most effective for his growth. After that, as a last touch, he eliminated areas that were either too far or too dangerous. Like that, a guide

map for most efficient level up was complete.

Vulcan looked at the map he created.

It was a complicated and large map of Act 2. However, from the perspective of ignoring all the parts that were not checked, the map looked about as simple as Act 1's fields.

‘There is no need for me to waste time in some hunting ground that does not fit my type.’

Vulcan felt his confidence filling up inside as he prepared more.

Of course, these were old information. Vulcan speculated that there would be many differences with how things were from the distant past.

However, that didn't make the information useless.

Vulcan just needed to correct wrong or useless information as he moved forward in Act 2.

“Ah, it is done!”

Vulcan got up from the pub's table and stretched big.

On his right hand, there was a small book titled ‘Act 2 Complete

Conquest! (Player Only).’

Watching Vulcan, Beruneru mumbled.

“You are being a dumbass.”

Even Meruham, who was sitting next in silence, shook his head quietly.

Vulcan felt awkward, so he opened the pub door and went outside.

As usual, a great weather greeted Vulcan.

“Ah, that’s right. I was going to make the trade today.”

Vulcan, without hesitation, went straight to a place of gathering for Players.

“Wow, this place has gotten better than before.”

Perhaps it was because the Order of Virtue was sliced in half. Perhaps it was because Players, Uruo and others, went to receive teaching from Filder and Beruneru.

The main base for the Players Alliance grew in size significantly.

It was not as big as the Denomination's temple or the Order's residence, but the base was not lacking in any way to be called as a place of gathering for an organization.

On top of this, it appeared its membership grew as well.

According to the words on the street, it was due to Uruo, who was a stubborn man, having a change in his personality.

Vulcan tilted his head dumbfoundedly.

‘Can a man change in just five years?’

Well, it was not that important to Vulcan.

A Player escorted Vulcan to Uruo's office.

Uruo greeted Vulcan with an expressionless face.

Uruo brought out countless number of red orbs and said,

“I have gathered them all as you said, so take them. Now, it is your turn.”

“... You trade very fast.”

“I don't want to talk to you for long, so hurry up. The item.”

Vulcan looked at Uruo with a disapproving gaze. Vulcan opened his inventory and collected all of the orbs. After that, Vulcan's inventory poured out a pile of items.

“Um.”

Uruo was surprised by the amount. It was more than what he expected.

He collected the items and said,

“100 to 300 level... They are all Grand-scale or higher. It was a good trade.”

“All right then. Live well.”

“Wait. By the way... What do you plan to do with the red orbs? Why are you collecting them?”

Uruo tossed a question to Vulcan who turned around.

They were orbs of vitality. They have a pretty high probability of dropping when slaying a monster.

However, it could not be consumed. It appeared to be seemingly useless, so Players had been just setting them aside and let them pile up.

Vulcan made a trade proposition to Uruo. Vulcan said that he will give useful items to the Alliance if Uruo gave Vulcan all of vitality orbs. It was a trade deal that Uruo could not possibly lose anything from, therefore, he accepted.

However, looking at Vulcan giving so many items in return for the orbs, Uruo became curious.

However, Vulcan didn't give a proper answer.

“They are useless in Act 1, so mind your own business.”

Vulcan didn't want to bother with explaining it all. He cut the conversation short and left the base.

Vulcan had a bit of time to spare before the meeting with Jake. Vulcan headed to the north gate field.

It has been a while since Vulcan faced Hellgoat.

In the past, Hellgoats felt overwhelming when even just three of them came at Vulcan at once. Now, they were easy to deal with.

Pazzzic.

Meh heh heh heh....



[Experience points went up.]

[Experience points went up.]

Hellgoats dropped like flies from continuously launched lightning magic attacks.

Feeling great about slaughtering Hellgoats, Vulcan smiled big.

Watching Vulcan, two Zenith warriors, who looked like they were sick of him, stepped back.

“That runt. Why is he still here?”

“I don’t know. He is a lunatic. What’s he doing here trolling around in a place for warriors who are beneath him? Tsk.”

‘Let me be for a while. Tomorrow, I’ll be a newbie again.’

Vulcan was thinking there was nothing wrong with enjoying a hunt for the last time before going to Act 2.

Vulcan let their complaints fall off from his ear and continued to hunt.

Although it was not a lot, it relieved his stress a bit.

---

As usual, Vulcan met Jake at the pub.

Jake said,

“So, we will be saying goodbyes forever tomorrow.”

“Not at all. I can visit using the Cross-dimensional teleportation technique. I’ll come to visit Act 1 as a vacation once I clear Act 2.”

“Haha! Vacation? There are countless people crawling on the ground because Act 1 is so difficult for them. You have some pride.”

“I probably have a little less than big bro.”

Vulcan received Jake’s words with a smile.

A year before Vulcan’s return, Dokgo Hoo have left for the Enlightened World.

He was not as powerful as Vulcan, but Dokgo Hoo didn’t have anyone else that could top his talent.

Because of this, The Six hoped he would go to Act 2. However, Dokgo Hoo refused like a swift swing of a sword.

‘I’ll become more powerful than Yur Dong-bin the Enlightened Blade. I’ll be Dokgo Hoo the Enlightened Sword! Hahaha’

Dokgo Hoo disappeared after leaving those words. Since then, he became a legend in Beloong City.

As usual, Jake drank from the bottle and said,

“I see. If it is you, you will do well. There is nothing to fault about your talent, and you have SYSTEM, which is like a cheat. You also have heard all those stories from the managers about their experiences in Act 2. From what I heard, managers of other cities hardly ever tell people about their experiences... I think you won’t have to fear even demi-gods.”

“To begin with, I heard demi-gods are benevolent toward human beings. There is no need to fear them.”

“It’s just a figure of speech. It’s even less fun talking to you now.”

Jake clicked his tongue and continued.

“Anyway. If you run into my teacher, please let him know I’m doing well.”

“Hm. If he is as you say, then I must meet him. I’ll definitely tell him about how you are doing.”

Back in the days when Jake had no will to live, Jake had a teacher who taught him the way of merchant.

If he had the personality that Jake described, it was most likely that he would be making his way through merchant business instead of combat.

From the experience with Jake, Vulcan learned the importance of having a good connection with a trustworthy merchant.

Vulcan had no reason to refuse Jake's favor.

‘If I could establish a good trade relationship with him through knowing Jake, that would be even better.’

“Anyway, this is my last day, so let's enjoy our drink.”

“Haha. All right! Let's drink until our noses turn to sides!”

“... I'll enjoy it a little bit since I have to go to Act 2 tomorrow.”

Like that, the night in the Beloong City went by.

---

Vulcan, who have finished all of preparations, went over the list of items.

Vulcan had countless number of special potions and return

scrolls from Filder and Beruneru.

He also had the small booklet, ‘Act 2 Complete Conquest! (Players Only).’

“Phew...”

He finished saying farewell to everyone he knew.

The Six, Jake, Anderson’s bunch, the three duel maniacs, and even Lee Jung-yup who was sleeping in the residence of the Order’s dead master...

Now, Vulcan didn’t have anything left to do here in Act 1.

“Phewa...”

Vulcan took another deep breath and tried to tame his nervousness and excitement.

The fate of Earth and his family depended on how Vulcan acted from now on. Thinking about that made his heart heavy...

However, Vulcan was also confident that he could handle it.

Vulcan lightly jumped a few times from where he stood, took a stance, and then charged toward the end of the north gate field like

an arrow.

“Let’s do this!”

# Chapter 54 - A Newbie That's Not Like A Newbie

---

At an instant, Vulcan arrived at where Sarantis was.

In a loud voice, Vulcan called out for Sarantis.

“Come out you bastard!”

**KUUOOOOO**

**KUGUGUGUGU**

“Die!”

**KUUUUAAANG**

**KUUUUWAAAAARRRRR**

[Your experience points went up.]

From the last time, Vulcan knew now that Sarantis had an absolutely disgusting, abhorrent appearance. So, Vulcan launched

magic attacks as soon as he noticed a figure appearing and defeated Sarantis.

He collected the dropped item and waited for a moment. Like before, Baek Ja-gyeong in holy mountain spirit like getup came to stand before Vulcan.

“You are bac...”

“Please send me to Act 2.”

“All right.”

Baek Ja-gyeong appeared to be in a bad mood somehow.

Vulcan didn't care. He only waited with his arms crossed.

Baek Ja-gyeong put his hands together, closed his eyes, and mumbled for a moment. With a shouting, he put forth his hand.

With his movement, a 10 ft diameter circular portal with blue wavering light appeared.

“You will be able to go to Act 2's world through this portal. Unlike Act 1, there is a manager at the start of Act 2, so ask if there is anything you want.”



“Yes. It was good to see you again.”

Vulcan bowed. Without hesitation, Vulcan tossed his body into the portal.

“That rascal. He is in such a hurry.”

With a ‘pung’ sound, Baek Ja-gyeong disappeared with smokes.

Like five years ago, both Vulcan and Baek Ja-gyeong disappeared to places they belong.

However, the situation was different.

Vulcan, who was a max level being, was starting as a newbie again. Still, this time, he was starting with information from experienced people.

A new world was opening in front of Vulcan.

---

Wheeeeing...

“Oh! It’s been so long since someone new came!”

There was a man lying down and scratching his belly. Rumithus, a manager of Act 2, got up in hurry.

As a punishment for flirting with the wife of his brother, he ended up being a guide for newbies arriving at Act 2. It has been 500 years since he started this job. Needless to say, it was a humble job beneath his statue.

He was stranded in an empty land with nothing to entertain him. The only thing that he had was having conversations with newbies coming from Act 1 to Act 2.

‘It would be great if a talkative one came. Someone other than High-elves or Dragonians. They are too stiff in personalities. It would be great if it was a friendly demi-god.’

With great anticipation, Rumithus stared at the circular portal.

In front of his eyes, the being that appeared was the greatest talent from Beloong City, a human being, Vulcan.

“What? A human?”

Rumithus opened his eyes wide, and then he smiled big.

It would have been better if it was a demi-god, someone with the blood of gods mixed in. However, a human was also not bad for having a conversation.

To begin with, gods were benevolent toward humans, and humans worshipped gods.

Rumithus spoke with a dignified look on his face.

“Welcome, human. I am one of managers in Act 2. I’m here to help you adjust to this place. My name is Rumithus.”

Vulcan was not able to answer him promptly.

It was because there was a notification in the SYSTEM’s main quest. It has been a while since this happened.

[Quest generated!]

[Main Quest – Get Acknowledged by Hokulus, the supreme manager of Act 2.]

[Difficulty – S (Asgard Standard)]

[Reward – One Wish]

\*Get acknowledged by Hokulus, a powerful water god who is the supreme manager of Act 2. You need to possess the power rivalling that of a god to be acknowledged by him.

‘It is as Filder explained. I think Filder said they will give me a test...’

Having carefully observed the notification window, he got a grip, looked at Rumithus and bowed.

Then, Vulcan lifted his head and checked Rumithus's abilities.

[Act 2 Manager Rumithus, a god of love]

[???Lv]

\*There is a vast difference in abilities. Determining exact level is not possible.

The look on Vulcan's face darkened a little.

He ran into a huge gap in abilities immediately after coming to Act 2.

Although Vulcan cleared Act 1, now, he had to live the life as a newbie again.

A sense of defeat was going through the roof and piercing the sky.

‘Still... The situation is better than how I started in Beloong City.’

Vulcan's current level was 472.

Although the number alone made him to be at the bottom of Act 2, his actual abilities rivaled that of those with level 700. So, it could be said that Vulcan actually belonged somewhere between low and middle range of rankings.

Also, on top of this, although the booklet was made from memories of distant past, Vulcan had a useful guidebook prepared.

Vulcan had no reason to stay trapped in a sense of defeat.

“Since you are a manager of Act 2, may I ask you questions about this place?”

“Haha. Child. It seems you have an impatient personality. Of course you can ask. What are you curious about?”

Rumithus smiled compassionately and looked at Vulcan.

Meanwhile, with a stuffy look on his face, Vulcan observed Rumithus.

‘If I ever got to see ancient Greek gods, it probably would feel like meeting him.’

Rumithus appeared to be full of confidence, benevolent toward

human beings, but it didn't seem like he was completely innocent.

That was Vulcan's judgment on Rumithus's character.

Having thought this far, Vulcan asked Rumithus. He was going to ask about the parts in his guidebook that he was not sure about because the information used to make it was very old. Rumithus panicked when Vulcan started to ask about fine details.

'What the... Who is this runt? How come he knows so much?'

Rumithus expected things like where to go or the location of a hunting ground that fits his current level.

However, instead, questions after questions, Vulcan was asking about things that only those who have lived in Act 2 for a long time would be able to ask. With so many of these questions pouring out, Rumithus was not able to answer properly.

'I have been here only for 500 years, so I don't know!'

Is the blue dragon, who ruled western island as its strongest 700 years ago, still alive?

I heard there was a town 1200 years ago that was made by human beings gathered there. Is that place still in existence?

They were things that Rumithus had no idea about.

Noticing that Rumithus was not able to answer, Vulcan nodded.

Vulcan asked just in case Rumithus knew. Vulcan didn't have high hopes about them, so he wasn't too disappointed either.

Vulcan bowed respectfully and asked Rumithus for a favor.

“Thank you for showing your care for me who is just a newbie in Act 2. I think it is about time I headed out. So, I was wondering if you could please give me a blessing of protection for a newbie.”

“... How do you know that?”

“The manager holy spirit in Act 1 mentioned it in middle of conversation.”

“I... Is that so.”

Rumithus was engulfed in Vulcan's rapid pace of going over information. Rumithus gathered his holy power in his right hand. An orb shining brilliantly in all colors floated in the air, and it slowly got absorbed into top of Vulcan's head.

Woooong...

There was a mark in his forehead that shined in all colors.

It meant Vulcan received a protective blessing from Rumithus, a manager of Act 2.

“I, Rumithus, a god of love and a manager of Act 2, bestowed upon you a protective blessing. From now on, for the next ten years, no resident in Act 2 can harm you. Also, you cannot harm any residents in Act 2 for the duration. In Espo City, the only official city in Act 2, you can use all of amenities there for free for 10 years. The mark in your forehead will disappear exactly 10 years from now. After that, the protective blessing will be voided.”

“Thank you.”

Vulcan bowed properly with his head.

With his hand, he pointed toward Espo City and asked,

“Is that the direction toward Espo City?”

“... That’s right.”

“Thank you, your divine highness. I, a humble human, will take my leave now.”

“Oh... right. Be safe, child.”

Surrounding himself in Thunder God’s might, Vulcan quickly



disappeared.

Rumithus, who vacantly stared at Vulcan leaving, mumbled,

“Who is this rascal? Is he really a newbie?”

Act 2’s world was vastly wider than Act 1. It was beyond comparison.

There were so many buildings, and there were various beings of different race walking among the buildings.

Vulcan stared at them with a vacant look on his face.

[High-elf Arunean]

[661Lv]

[High-priest Chung-juk the grand monk]

[733Lv]

[Dragonian Cha - pierre]

[586Lv]

[Holy Beast White Tiger Ku]

[791Lv]

‘... Still, I’m getting used to this better than how I did with Beloong City.’

Each and every one of them were far beyond people like Ho-Gyeong or Bellon who ruled Act 1 as its strongest.

They looked like they could destroy an island with a snap of a finger if they went down to the lower dimension. Seeing so many of them walking around in the city like pebbles on streets felt like watching a scene from a comical satire movie.

‘They are all so much more powerful than me. This is bad... Still, I think I can beat that Dragonian. I might be able to go up against that high-elf...’

Vulcan was completely absorbed in watching the residents of Espo City. Suddenly, he gasped for air and closed his mouth.

He quickly lowered his head and moved away in a casual walk so he would not draw attention.

This was Espo City, the only official city in Act 2.

Act 2 was a very large continent, so there were other cities in other popular places. However, Espo City was the only place that was officially acknowledged as a city in Act 2. This was the place where the managers of Act 2 resided, so the city was substantially larger and had more people in it.

‘It is a perfect place to get into fights.’

The place was a gathering place of all sorts of people. There were clueless newbies, veterans who had been grunting away for several hundred years, and all sorts of beings visiting for trade purposes or in search of people for jobs.

It would have been odd if the place was peaceful.

‘Hm. Actually, there probably are quite a few people that die immediately in Espo City after going to Act 2. What? Who would do that after having experienced plenty of the newbie life in Act 1? Just think about someone like Dokgo Hoo.’

Vulcan thought about what Rogweed. It was convincing.

So, Vulcan had no intention of having this place as his primary base of operation.

To start with, the hunting grounds nearby this area had the weakest monsters for newbies. They were not going to be helpful for Vulcan’s quick level up.

‘Even though I have the protective blessing, I’m sick of a busy place full of fights!’

Vulcan’s plan was to go pick a hunting ground that was perfect for him and focus on level up only without having have to deal with people.

Vulcan walked as he avoided the gazes of proud high level warriors, and he eventually got to a building.

Its sign board had a picture of a giant ship with wings.

Vulcan opened the buildings door without hesitation.

Kkiiick.

The door made a squeak noise. It seemed it needed more oil.

Vulcan could see an employee working the counter who woke up after hearing the door noise.

[Ferry Associate Employee Kiba, a Legend of Vagrants]

[611Lv]

‘He is a resident. Is he doing a part time job?’

“Welcome. Um! You are a newbie.”

Looking at the shining mark on Vulcan’s forehead, Kiba hardened the expression on his face.

“This ferry shop travels only to western island. There probably isn’t any island in that area that you can handle.”

“That’s all right. I came here because there is someone I need to meet.”

“Someone you need to meet? By chance... Blue Dragon?”

“Ah, so he is still in Act 2. Yes, that person.”

“Well, it is about time he left. Must have heard about him from the pub, right?”

“Well, yes.”

Vulcan mumbled it away to get past the question. Meanwhile, he cheered inside.

‘For now, this is a good start.’

To Vulcan, Kiba said,

“Hm... Well, everyone wants to meet him. Still, you have nothing to offer him, so it probably won't work.”

“Still, well... I want to at least try going there. Will that be all right?”

“Of course. It is free for newbies with protective blessing. However... People won't like to see a newbie on the ferry... Well, it has nothing to do with me.”

Kiba brought out a paper from the drawer and said to Vulcan,

“Take this with you. You know where to go to get on the ship, right? It departs in six hours from now, so take your time to go find it.”

“Yes. Thank you.”

Vulcan used the remaining time and looked around many places in Espo City.

There were shops operated directly by managers. Like Beloong City, there were countless number of people gathered. There were people having argument in ever increasing voices, and there were newbies who were headed to hunting grounds with serious looks on their faces.

Being in middle of all these people, Vulcan felt a little used to Act 2.

Until one hour before the departure, Vulcan just watched the Espo City's activities without doing anything that would make him stand out. Vulcan finally changed his direction.

Vulcan's journey to the western island, his first objective, have begun.

---

“An unmanned airship... So-Hyung... it is called. So, this is it.”

Its overall shape was that of a ship. Vulcan could see a ship that had shining wings, the kind that would belong to a holy beast.

Vulcan found it to be quite mysterious, and he didn't hide his intrigued face while getting on the air ship.

‘Something like this moves on its own. How does it work? Just magic?’

It looked like something out of a cartoon that he saw in his childhood. Impressed, Vulcan looked around the airship here and there.

He felt like he was a main character going on an adventure to a world of dreams and hopes. He actually felt a little excited.

‘That’s right. Something like this is an idealized vision for a fantasy world.’

It was a different kind of emotion that was absent from a place like Beloong City where all there was blood splatter filled battles of life and death.

However, Vulcan’s sense of excitement did not last long.

There was a man that didn’t like Vulcan. He glared at Vulcan with a displeased gaze. His gaze met Vulcan and soon, he even confirmed the newbie’s mark on Vulcan’s forehead. He complained directly to Vulcan’s face,

“A human that doesn’t know its place is acting all high and mighty.”

He was shaking his head left and right.

Vulcan forced himself from crumpling his face. By the force of habit, Vulcan scanned his abilities.

[Ancient Dark-elf Elcane]

[699Lv]



‘He doesn’t have all that high of level himself, yet he is saying harsh stuff like that to me?’

Vulcan was too annoyed to just forgive him.

# Chapter 55 - A Newbie That's Not Like A Newbie (Part 2)

---

Naturally, the look on Vulcan's face also hardened.

Actually, Elcane's level was high enough that he would not be treated as a newbie.

On average, those that enter Act 2 had levels around low 500 when they started. In comparison, Elcane's level was 699, which was substantially higher.

However, because Vulcan rapidly grew and reached a new height while he was in the Underground Graveyard, Vulcan possessed the strength of someone at level 700. Because Vulcan was thinking of himself as a newbie, he also figured Elcane, someone with similar strength as himself, was a newbie.

‘Still, I shouldn't fight him.’

Vulcan didn't have to worry about the situation leading to the worst possible scenario even if Elcane picked a fight with him. It was because Vulcan had the protective blessing from a manager.

Still, if Vulcan reacted to every time a situation like this came up, it could put his future life in jeopardy.

‘If I did, I could die under pile of grudges ten years later. I should

keep things smooth.'

Still, it could not be helped that the situation was seriously spoiling Vulcan's mood.

Ignoring Elcane, Vulcan looked at others.

The most eye-catching one of them all was a man lying down on the floor in middle of the airship.

He was wearing a loose pants that was convenient for movements, and he was not wearing anything on the top. The man was packed with muscles on top of muscles. They looked solid as if they were mixed with iron.

[Toolkas, a demi-god, son of Mumnus]

[851Lv]

'He is almost at the level of Act 1 managers.'

The way he was all stretched out and napping didn't give off that kind of vibe, but the scan told him otherwise.

Vulcan turned his head and looked at the other one remaining.

He had a decorative circlet with magnificent looking wings. Along with cool leather armor and red cape, the man had the look of an architype heroic warrior.

[Phantaero, Hegatus' Brave Hero]

[759Lv]

Phantaero was also looking at Vulcan. Unlike Elcane, the man had an amicable smile. Phantaero said,

“It’s nice to meet you. It seems like you have a business at the western island.”

“How do you do? Yes, I do have a small business there.”

“Haha. It’s a little dangerous for a newbie to go there... Well, I’m sure you know how to take care of yourself.”

The man casually walked toward Vulcan and told Vulcan his name,

“Even meeting like this is fate. Let’s introduce ourselves at least. My name is Phantaero.”

“I’m Vulcan.”

“I see. Vulcan, you seem to be a human as well... Is that right?”

Vulcan nodded. Phantaero whispered to Vulcan with a smile on his face.

“I see. Ignore that dark elf. Actually, only the demi-gods are good toward humans. Everyone else are bastards that just don’t care.”

“Is that so?”

“That’s right. Also, monsters often come to attack an airship while it is on the air. You could probably understand that others would feel uneasy about having a newbie in a situation like this.”

Vulcan nodded and thought about what he just said.

Although he heard rough explanation from Filder and knew about it, it seemed the beings in this world looked down on humans.

‘Well, even Beruneru said humans are the least trustworthy bastards in Act 2.’

Remembering The Six’s warning, Vulcan made a bitter smile.

However, Vulcan couldn’t just push away Phantaero who was being friendly toward Vulcan.

Also, Vulcan had no intention of hanging out with Elcane, who made a bad first impression.

“Vulcan, let’s at least chat while we are on the way.”

“Yes, Mr. Phantaero.”

There were two humans on the airship who naturally came to speaking terms.

---

The airship speeded across the blue sky.

The ship’s open deck felt like being inside of a room because of an invisible layer shielding the passengers from the wind.

The demi-god was still sleeping in middle of the deck while snoring loudly. Elcane the dark elf occasionally shot arrow to the outside of the airship as if he was doing practice.

‘It looks like the invisible layer does not block attacks coming from inside of the ship. Is it because this is a ship made by a god?’

While listening to Phantaero’s words, Vulcan thought about something else for a moment. Vulcan was losing interest because he was talking about things that Vulcan already knew. However, when Phantaero got to an important part, Vulcan started to listen carefully again.

“... So, they are bad mouthed about a lot. When it comes to humans, out of a 100 humans, about 30 of them could be considered evil. On the other hand, other beings essentially don't have anyone evil to begin with.”

“It's that bad?”

Vulcan asked as he cringed.

“That's right. The other beings may appear arrogant because they have strong pride, but they are saints in comparison to humans. When it comes to beings other than humans, perhaps one in a 100 may harm others... Ah, the beastmen are exceptions. They have such a strong battle instinct, so...”

The Six told Vulcan similar things.

According to them, Act 2 would be a significantly safer place than Act 1 if it wasn't for humans.

Vulcan thought The Six were being a little harsh, but now that Vulcan was hearing Phantaero repeating several times to emphasize that Vulcan should be wary of humans, Vulcan was even starting to think that perhaps The Six was being nice about it.

“Still, not everyone will be like that. There are humans who are brave heroes...”

“Um? By any chance, did you know that I'm a brave hero?”

“Yes. You are wearing clothes that I imagined a brave hero would wear.”

“Haha. Actually, people that I have met for the first time roughly figured it out too.”

Breaking into a laughter, he continued.

“I thought you already have struggled for a few years in Act 2, but it seems like you have not been here for even a month?”

In silence, Vulcan looked at Phantaero.

Vulcan wondered if he said something unusual that made Phantaero say that.

Watching Vulcan worrying a little, Phantaero said in a little more serious voice unlike before.

“When someone mentions a brave hero, there are images that people think about. Selflessness, sacrificing oneself for the sake of others, being people’s only hope. There are many who open up to a brave hero because of they hold such beliefs about brave heroes. However, you should be careful.”

Phantaero took a moment of pause and said with a strong emphasis,



“If necessary, brave heroes can become more selfish than anyone. Their altruistic attitude toward others is... limited to those that are in their own worlds.”

“ ... ”

Although it was only a little bit, Vulcan was surprised by what Phantaero said.

It was a good advice that was a wake-up call for a newbie.

However, Vulcan could also feel a sense of self-hatred from Phantaero that could not be hidden.

Vulcan was agonizing over what to say to Phantaero, but he said with his face full of laughter.

“Haha! Well, why are you taking it so seriously? It’s just an overly cautious advice meant for newbies. People who meet a brave hero for the first time usually have fantasized expectations, and they get disappointed too.”

“I see.”

“That’s right. It gets uncomfortable when people have such expectations from me. I feel like I have to act like a saint. So, please treat me like everyone else instead.”

Vulcan nodded. Phantaero shrugged his shoulder and said,

“Gosh. I’m usually not this friendly, but for some odd reason, I find you to be quite amicable. Are you from Hegatus by any chance? Or... It can’t be that... you are also a brave hero?”

Having heard the question, Vulcan worried a little.

On the surface, Vulcan was just a Player. However, given the circumstance, there wasn’t anyone else that fitted the bill of a ‘brave hero’ than Vulcan.

“In a way, I am close to being a brave hero. I don’t have the power of a brave hero though.”

“Hm. I don’t quite understand you. We have a lot of time, so why don’t you tell me your story?”

Phantaero literally took a stance to prepare himself to hear a long story from Vulcan.

Facing him, Vulcan slowly started to tell the story.

It wasn’t like telling him the story was going to create a weakness for Vulcan. Also, Vulcan wanted to share the story and his frustration with someone who was in a similar situation as himself.

The story was told smoothly.

Vulcan already have told the story to Filder, and it went smoothly also because the person hearing the story was a brave hero who could understand the situation easily.

“... That’s what happened.”

“ ... ”

With a little bit of a feeling of relief, Vulcan ended the explanation.

The heavy burden of knowing that the fate of his world is on his hands, the burden was heavy even for those with great mental fortitude.

The burden was so heavy that the suffocation from it would have drove to madness if Vulcan could not tell it all to someone like this once in a while.

Breathing slowly, Vulcan looked at Phantaero.

He could see Phantaero shedding thick tears like [chicken poo](#).

[Translator’s note: The chicken poo-like tears is an old expression in Korea. It means that the situation is so desperate, hopeless, or sad that the tears are very thick. There’s more to this,

but this explains at least a part of the meaning.]

‘I think his reaction is a little too much.’

Phantaero was a giant, a mountain of a man, yet he was crying like an innocent little girl. It was not a pretty sight.

Vulcan said,

“Excuse me... Please calm down.”

“Kuk... Kuhup... To think that you are carrying such a heavy burden... Kup. I never knew. Your world is already destroyed by demon force... How could such a tragedy...”

“Aren’t you in a similar situation as me?”

“Not quite. You are in a much more difficult situation than I. My world has not yet been invaded by the demon force. I just need to find the holy sword and go back... You need to clear Act 2 in order to restore your broken world. That is...”

Phantaero didn’t finish his sentence.

However, Vulcan had a pretty good idea of what he was going to say.

‘As I thought. He must be thinking that it is impossible for a human being to clear Act 2.’

It was an obvious thought.

Although Vulcan didn’t know exactly how long Asgard existed, it must have been at least 10,000 years. In those long years, not a single human ever cleared the Act 2. Phantaero’s concern was well justified.

‘However, that doesn’t mean I can’t do it.’

Vulcan possessed talents that was acknowledged by Filder, the strongest of all humans in the history.

Because Vulcan was confident enough about it, he didn’t mind much about Phantaero’s pessimistic reaction.

“Haha. Still, there is a chance. That should mean a lot. If that doesn’t work out, I can at least become as strong as possible and return so I can stop the next invasion.”

“I see... You also have the cross-dimensional teleportation skill.”

“By the way, a while ago, you said the holy sword. What is that?”

Phantaero stared at Vulcan with an odd look on his eyes. As if he just realized something, Phantaero said,

“Ah, right. You are not a brave hero. It is just that you are the only one who can fight the demon lord. That’s what you said, right?”

“That’s right.”

“That must be why you don’t know about it. You can think of the holy sword as a weapon that only brave heroes can use. It can be used by other people, but it won’t be as effective as when brave heroes use it. A holy sword is incredibly effective against demons in particular. Practically all brave heroes wondering around Act 2 are desperately looking for a holy sword.”

“Um...”

‘So there was something like that...’

It was something that Vulcan didn’t hear from even The Six. It seemed that they didn’t tell Vulcan because it was not something he could use anyway.

‘Also, even if I had something like a holy sword, it is not like I could bring back my dead family with it.’

Vulcan got rid of his interest in the holy sword and asked about something else.

Most of it was to confirm if the guidebook that he made was accurate. Although Phantaero just told Vulcan that brave heroes are selfish, Phantaero spared no information.

Most of the information were the same as what Vulcan already knew, so they were not much of help. However, Phantaero's good intention was making Vulcan feel better.

‘I doubt there will be many here that would tell me all this without getting anything in return...’

Of course, it was not like Phantaero gave Vulcan special information that others don't know about. However, it was enough to make a good first impression.

Having heard most of what he wanted to confirm, Vulcan suddenly did a proper bow toward Phantaero.

“Why are you doing that all of sudden?”

“I just wanted to thank you for your good-will.”

“It's fine. The information was not anything special. You would have gotten to know them all after wondering around Act 2 for two to three years anyway.”

Phantaero seemed a little embarrassed by Vulcan's gesture, and Vulcan thanked him with a sincere face.

Glancing at the two, Elcane quietly mumbled,

“What a load of bullcrap.”

---

About a day had gone by since Vulcan got on the airship.

It was going to take about three days to get to the west island, so that meant Vulcan had about two days left.

With a little surprised look, Vulcan was looking at Elcane.

The arrows were being launched in stealth without any sound.

It felt significantly more fearsome than destructive and violent techniques that Vulcan saw often in Asgard.

It felt like a silent sniper.

After saying a few words to express how impressive it was, Vulcan said to Phantaero,

“That dark elf is quite skilled.”

“Gosh. You are just a newbie who had been here only for a month. You do realize you are not in position to judge the strength of anyone, right?”



Phantaero scolded Vulcan, and then said to Vulcan using telepathic communication,

- Also, elves have exceptionally good hearing, so watch what you say. Look. He is glaring at you.

- I'll be careful from now on. Still, I praised him, yet his reaction is quite negative.

- You are beneath his height. Also, you are a human. There wouldn't be any elves that would feel great about being judged by such a human. Also, we made it this far thanks to his diligent work. You were being rude.

With a dumbfounded face, Vulcan said,

- What do you mean? What did he do for us? When?

- Perhaps you didn't feel it because you are not at his height yet, but he had been hunting down monsters all this time ever since we departed. He hunted down the monsters that were along the path of the airship, and also the ones that were approaching the airship.

- ...

- If it was like any other day, we would have been pestered by monsters coming close to the airship. Dealing with them is quite a

bother. As expected, having a skilled archer is allowing us to fly through without any trouble. Huh? What are you doing?

Vulcan had a blank look on his face. Noticing this, Phantaero tried to talk to him.

However, Vulcan could not respond.

With a shocked face, Vulcan looked at Elcane.

‘He is at level 699.... Yet, he is at a greater height than me?

# Chapter 56 - A Newbie That's Not Like A Newbie (Part 3)

---

Vulcan thought about countless people that he had met in Act 1 and their levels.

Certainly, levels were not definite indicators of their strength.

For Zenith-Rate warriors who had same 400 levels, some were stronger than he thought, and some were weaker than he thought.

This was a conclusion that Vulcan arrived to after having observed many cases.

Also, there was one other conclusion that he arrived to.

‘There never was anyone with the similar level as me who was stronger than me!’

It was not a matter of arrogance. It was something Vulcan was certain of after having spent five years in Act 1. Even when facing an opponent who was at the level that truly matched Vulcan’s actual abilities, he was still certain of a tie or better outcomes.

This was the reason why he was thinking about fighting Lee Jung-yup when Vulcan was only at level 190.

Vulcan believed that he was actually around level 700 in practical

strength. Meanwhile, Elcane's level was 699.

Based on his past experience, Vulcan thought that Elcane shouldn't be stronger.

That's how it should be, however,

'He can detect presence of monsters... that I didn't notice.'

Vulcan was shocked.

Of course, it wasn't like Vulcan was really at level 700 in all aspects.

His stats were lacking by 200 levels.

Also, dark elves could have highly developed senses. Vulcan thought perhaps he shouldn't be surprised.

'Still... I never felt like this before.'

It felt like Elcane would be stronger than Vulcan even if Vulcan was really at level 700. Of course, he figured that the difference would be small, but the thought was still shocking.

To calm his mind, which was in chaos, Vulcan closed his eyes.

A bit of time passed, and Vulcan came to an unpleasant conclusion.

‘Just like differences between Murim warriors and Players, is there a difference between humans and other beings?’

Players relied only on skills, and ordinary warriors overwhelmed Players with their talent.

However, these other beings, with their superior innate abilities, saw these human warriors as beneath their feet.

‘As if difference in talent is not enough, now it is difference in species.’

Vulcan lightly bit his lower lips.

- Haha. Don't be so hard on yourself because you didn't notice the monsters. It has not been long since you got here. If that was possible, even dogs or cows would have become gods.

- ...

- Also, elves are born with superior senses, so don't compare yourself on that kind of things.

Having said this far, Phantaero stretched and moved to a different place.

He was being considerate to Vulcan because he thought Vulcan might be feeling inferior.

Vulcan also knew what Phantaero was trying to do, so he appreciated it.

However, Vulcan also had negative feeling about it.

Now, the fact was, Phantaero was kind to Vulcan because he believed Vulcan was the weaker one.

Vulcan was not treated as a talented rookie. Instead, he was treated as just another human being.

Although it was just a little bit, it was frustrating.

‘Of course... I have no intention of letting it be like this forever.’

Vulcan thought about the early days when arrived at the Beloong City.

Filder and Beruneru made Vulcan do grunt works while they taught his big brother Dokgo Hoo enlightenment.

In comparison to how things were back then, this was a better treatment.

‘In the end, I just need to prove myself to them.’

Vulcan got himself fired up for his rivalry against unknown number of warriors in Act 2.

Although it was for a brief moment, his emotion was strong enough to forget about the destruction of Earth or the wish.

---

Elcane had his eyes closed while leaning against the airship’s ledge.

He suddenly opened his eyes wide, looked up the sky, and diligently pulled the bow.

Phantaero, who was cleaning his sword, seemed like he also felt something. He cringed and also looked at the direction that Elcane was staring toward.

Vulcan also put on a serious face. He asked,

“Seems like something is coming.”

“That’s right. I can’t tell very well yet, but... Looks like he can see roughly how many are coming. The look on his face is not looking very good.”

It was as Phantaero said.

However, it wasn't that Elcane had a serious face. He looked rather annoyed instead, so Vulcan was not concerned at all.

“Are there a lot of monsters attacking airships usually?”

“No. We use the airship because it is safer than sailing through the sea. I heard that, with a rotten luck, it can run into a swarm of monsters. It looks like we have a rotten luck this time.”

Having said this much, Phantaero smiled toward Vulcan.

“Still, you don't have to worry. It is annoying, but it is not dangerous.”

“I wasn't worrying either.”

“I see. Still... You should be prepared thoroughly. These monsters are different from Act 1.”

Worried, Phantaero said to Vulcan.

Vulcan told him he understood.

It was understandable that they were not going to count on Vulcan, who just came to Act 2. Vulcan understood this.



‘Still, if there is going to be a chance, I should do my part.’

Vulcan had no intention of leaving everything to just Elcane and Phantaero.

Instead of watching the battle like a scared little child, Vulcan figured that he would be better off just dozing off like the demi-god over there if he was going to just watch.

While Vulcan was thinking about that, Elcane was shooting arrows at an incredible pace.

His movements were rougher than before, but his shots were still almost silent.

It was as like watching a video with the sound muted. It was creeping out Vulcan a little.

‘It would be hell to meet him as the opponent at night.’

Still, it was too much to leave everything for Elcane to handle.

It seemed Elcane was like a sniper with one shot, one kill type of attacks. He didn’t appear to have a useful area effective attack.

Before long, the monsters got closer to the airship.

Elcane said as he looked at Phantaero,

“I reduced their numbers quite a bit, so you take care of ones coming inside.”

“I will.”

With a stern look on his face, Phantaero raised his sword.

Vulcan also took out his blade. However, Elcane didn’t even glance at Vulcan. He just went back to shooting arrows.

Vulcan finished getting ready for battle and checked the monsters.

[Harpy Queen Happy Harpy]

[533Lv]

[Legendary Griffon Calioru]

[525Lv]

[Legendary Giant Wyvern Arudo]

[541Lv]

...

[Cursed Elder Gargoyle Kuruchief]

[523Lv]

Each and every one of them were powerful monsters, rivaling Ho-gyeong or Bellon.

Vulcan could understand why Elcane was annoyed and Phantaero was concerned for Vulcan's safety.

There were almost hundreds of monsters that appeared to be as strong as a newbie that just came to Act 2. An ordinary newbie would have been shriveling from the frightening sight.

'A hundred Ho-gyeong, huh. No. Still, they are not as much work as him.'

Vulcan judged that he could handle them on his own.

It was going to be difficult because he was on an airship. He couldn't use hit and retreat tactic. Use of Superheated Inferno was

going to be limited as well. It was going to be a difficult fight.

However, there was a big difference between his power and monsters. Also, Vulcan was confident about mass slaughtering monsters, so he was not worried.

Vulcan activated the Thunder god's might.

Pazizizick

Vulcan's entire body was surrounded by golden sparks. Vulcan was about to have several hundreds of lightning magic ready, but Phantaero stopped Vulcan.

"Hey. If you want to survive in Act 2 for a long time, learn to be patient."

Looking at Phantaero's red cape waving in the wind, Vulcan put up a quizzical face.

Phantaero was being considerate, so that was not a bad thing. However, the fact that he looked down on Vulcan was making Vulcan definitely feel patronized.

However, only Vulcan knew his true strength. Phantaero, who had no idea about how strong Vulcan really was, couldn't let Vulcan step in to the battle. To Phantaero, Vulcan was just a newbie that just got to Act 2. Letting him join the battle was like letting Vulcan throw his life away.

‘Well, do whatever you want.’

Vulcan lost interest because of Phantaero’s constant worries for Vulcan’s safety. Vulcan took a stance that showed he was not going to care at all about the battle.

Vulcan was a little disappointed about not being able to get the experience points, but he figured that he will be getting it fast as soon as he found the hunting ground he wanted.

‘Now that it came to this, I might as well watch what a 750 level brave hero can do.’

Vulcan walked away from the platform as he thought this.

Before long, monsters swarmed around the airship.

Overwhelmed by the aura exuded by the warriors inside the airship, the monsters were not able to make a move, but it seemed like they were going to strike at the first chance they get.

Elcane already had put away his bow and was wielding an arming sword from his waist.

He asked Elcane,

“You are not planning on letting them enter inside of the ship,

are you?”

“Of course, I won’t let that happen. They are not quite inside the range yet... Sit tight and wait for a bit longer.”

Phantaero was wielding a two-handed sword with a red jewel.

It seemed he was detecting the monsters by their energies. He had his eyes closed.

Phantaero remained quiet despite violent sounds of monsters roaring and their wings tearing through the air.

Phantaero suddenly opened his eyes.

“Kuuaaap!”

Explosive muscular strength and tidal wave-like energy...

His sword was swung in a large circular motion. Without mercy, the energy exploding out from the sword exploded all monsters surrounding the airship.

**BOOM BOOM BABOOM BOOM BOOM**

“...!”

It was incredible. It was like several thousand missiles were launched in all directions.

Powerful monsters with minimum level of 500 were all exterminated. Not even given chance to scream in pain, they became bloody rain and poured down.

It was an unbelievable scene, the kind that was difficult to find even in legends.

However, there was another thing that Vulcan was surprised by.

It was a move that could be called a special move.

It definitely looked like a move that would strain one's body. However, Phantaero was standing tall and mighty like it didn't strain him at all.

Also, there was a mysterious orange aura that seemed to be making it all possible.

**UUUUOOONG**

It felt warm like the gentle gaze of parents looking at their newborn child. It felt full of warmth and hope, and the aura was exuding from Phantaero's entire body.

It was as if several million people's love, blessing, and hope were contained within the flame, and the energy was gently holding him.

With a blank stare, Vulcan asked Phantaero,

“Right now... This energy is...”

“Ah, this? It is the source of power that allows me to withstand this god forsaken world.”

Feeling awkward, he brushed across under his nose with his finger and said,

“It is energy for me, who is lacking in power. The energy contains the hopes and desires of the people in Hegatus, the lower dimension, who are praying.”

Having finished explaining, Phantaero slowly avoided Vulcan's gaze.

The look on his face seemed like he was sorry about something.

Vulcan didn't know what it was. He was just amazed by Phantaero's ability to recover so quickly.

“Hopes and desires of the people in the lower dimension... It is



incredible. You are not getting tired because you are able to borrow a little bit of strength from each of those people?”

“Um? Well... It’s something like that.”

Phantaero scratched the back of his head and responded awkwardly.

Actually, the aura that Phantaero just showed was something that all brave heroes who protect a dimension possessed. It was like a basic attribute of a brave hero.

However, because Vulcan was not a brave hero, Vulcan didn’t possess this power despite being burdened with even heavier mission than brave heroes. Phantaero was sorry about this fact.

So, to change the subject, he thought about a joke that wasn’t becoming of the situation.

However, he didn’t get the chance to tell it.

Elcane said to Phantaero in a stern voice,

“We have a rotten luck. Another wave is coming.”

“Um... This time... there are more.”

Phantaero crumpled his face.

The possibility of running into the monsters they just ran into was low as it was. Now, there was another wave that was even larger in numbers.

“It seems like someone with almost god-like strength must be hunting a giant monster in the ocean.”

“That’s a possibility. It seems like these monsters are running into us because they are trying to avoid that battle.”

Before anyone noticed, Elcane already had put away his sword and was launching arrows. He said,

“I’ll reduced it to about half, so you handle about 150 of them.”

“I will.”

Phantaero answered promptly.

He took a stance to be ready for the monsters that were approaching, but someone tapped his shoulder.

“Vulcan? What is it... Um.”

Phantaero narrowed his eyes.

It was quite impressive. The pressure exuded by Vulcan was something even Phantaero, someone who have experienced all sorts of things in Act 2, could not deny.

Behind Vulcan, who had sparks violently surrounding him, there were all sorts of lightning magic spells readied for launch.

“I have been in your debt until now. I’ll clean up this wave.”

“ ... ”

Vulcan’s words had a bit of excitement mixed in. Having heard his words, Phantaero vacantly looked at Vulcan’s face.

Vulcan was a newbie who had not been in Act 2 for more than a month.

From common sense stand point, Phantaero was supposed to stop Vulcan even if it meant giving him a beating. However, Phantero didn’t stop Vulcan.

Actually, he did not think Vulcan would be in danger. The thought did not occur to him at all.

‘It is not like he is stronger than me, but... How could he possess such strength!’

It felt like looking at a high class veteran magic specialist who had grunted away for over a hundred years in Act 2 just like Phantaero had for over a hundred years.

That was Phantaero's assessment of Vulcan who used his lightning magic to the fullest

# Chapter 57 - A Newbie That's Not Like A Newbie (Part 4)

---

“I’ll presume that you are leaving this wave to me.”

“... If I sense any danger, I’ll help.”

Phantaero said as he disengaged his combat stance.

Vulcan lightly nodded and started to generate more magic attacks endlessly.

With electrifying sound, lightning spears were generated continuously. However, the power felt from the spears were at a whole another dimension and size from ordinary lightning spears.

Each and every one of the spears were like lightning made by god of thunder.

Lightning spears like that were filling the airship in hundreds. Together, they were exuding blinding light that was to the point of making others difficult to have their eyes open.

Phantaero was absolutely impressed.

‘It is incredible. I’m at a loss for words. Does this man really have the newbie tag on him?’

Naturally, Phantaero thought about the time when he first arrived at Act 2.

Of course, Vulcan could not be compared to how Phantaero was back then.

Phantaero even forgot about that he was supposed to be ready just in case of an emergency. He strained his eyes to watch Vulcan.

He wanted to witness with certainty just how strong this newbie was.

Cuzuzuzuk.

Pazuzuzuzuk.

The lightning spears looked like they could shout out somewhere at any minute.

An ordinary mage would be breaking cold sweat to maintain all these. However, Vulcan was handling them all with ease.

They were generated through the SYSTEM, so Vulcan just needed to provide mana.

Noticing their numbers growing, even Elcane was not able to hide his surprise.

‘I’ll be shooting them through all directions anyway. There is no need for careful control.’

Fine control through traditional magic operation was useful only in fighting against small number of extremely powerful opponents. In a situation like this, it was a waste.

Vulcan replenished the depleted mana with potion and continued to increase the number of magic.

800... 900...

**1000.**

Number of lightning spears grew to astonishing four digit number.

The way they were floating on top of the airship and swarming looked violent like a swarm of bees just before the attack.

Chizizizik.

Chizizizizizi.

A brief moment passed, and monsters came close enough to the airship that each of them could be seen just with eyes.

However, instead of showing their violent nature, the monsters just looked at the top of the airship, instinctively realizing something was not right.

There were a thousand of lightning spears exuding blinding light.

A few quick thinking monsters were about to leave the scene. At that moment, the lightning spears scattered in all direction along with a frightening sound.

Pazicicizizik.

Kuuuuuuuuuuruua

There was no exception.

Not a single monster managed to dodge Vulcan's magic.

The magic attacks were prepared by a lightning mage who was at a far greater height than them, and the magic attacks were prepared carefully with time.

There was no way for them to dodge or block the attacks.

They merely left items and experience points as they disappeared slowly.



[You gained experience points.]

[You gained experience points.]

...

[You gained experience points.]

[Level Up!]

‘Level went up. Actually, it is about time.’

Vulcan retrieved all items using magic and plummeted down at where he stood.

The battle didn’t strain his mental strength. However, he used a large amount of mana to the point that he needed to get help from using a potion. He could not stop himself from feeling exhausted.

However, he didn’t feel frustrated from being tired.

Instead, the thrill from unleashing his full power was surrounding his entire body.

‘I think this is the first time I used the full strength since I obtained SS rank in lightning mastery...’

In Act 1 and the lower dimension, ones that could be considered worthy opponents were just three, Ho-gyeong, Bellon, and the supreme commander Nukuham.

However, even they were far below Vulcan’s strength.

Obviously, there was no need for Vulcan to use full power against them, and it seemed that lead to Vulcan feeling not satisfied.

‘Um. That’s not it. Perhaps my personality changed a little too...’

His basic personality didn’t change much.

However, certainly, he did become more proactive in comparison to how he was before he achieved enlightenment on lightning.

Vulcan no longer planned or calculated all sorts of things for battle. It could be said that Vulcan became a warrior who stepped into the battle without any hesitation when it came.

Vulcan was liking that change in himself.

‘I have no reason to be all calculating and rational in middle of the battle.’

His main magic attacks were lightning and flame.

They were both violent and ferocious type of magic that were more useful for offensive measures than defense.

Even if it was for the sake of further growth, Vulcan had a need to fight with even more intensity.

‘Especially while taking advantage of the protective blessing while I have it.’

Vulcan smiled refreshingly and said to Phantaero,

“We probably don’t have to work anymore until we get to the destination, right?”

“... Probably. Anyway, are you a Player?”

It was an obvious deduction after seeing how Vulcan retrieved items.

Vulcan nodded to say that he was right.

“Huh... I have seen a few Players in Act 1, but they were absolutely pathetic...”

Phantaero looked as surprised as if he had a monster in front of

him.

It was a completely different look from before when Phantaero was being considerate toward Vulcan.

With a satisfied look on his face, Vulcan looked toward Elcane.

Vulcan could see Elcane's hardened face.

Elcane was not revealing emotions in a big way like Phantaero was. However, it seemed Elcane was pretty shocked.

Vulcan, with even more satisfied face, turned his head.

Vulcan drank yet another mana potion and lied down on the floor in a pose similar to the demi-god Tolcas.

It was a very relaxed pose.

“ ... ”

Elcane glared at Vulcan as if he was going to punch a hole through him with the gaze.

What he just witnessed was beyond common sense. It could not be understood.

‘What is he? Is he not a human being?’

Obviously, Vulcan was a human.

Elcane used his sharp senses unique to elves to observe Vulcan. However, he didn’t feel that Vulcan was a demi-god or some other ancient being.

Elcane thought about all humans that he had seen until now.

There were those who were strong, and those who were weak. At the very least, human beings were not so pathetic that Elcane could treat them carelessly.

However, it was still true that humans were lacking in comparison to other beings.

This was especially true when it came to humans’ rate of growth.

Demi-gods or Dragonians, who were born with blessed body and abilities, grew in strength at fearsome rate.

It was to the point that other beings watching from the side fell into despair and hopelessness.

Unlike those beings, humans required blood, sweat and huge amount of time before they could stand in Act 2 as a strong warrior.

Also, that was just about extreme few with best talents among all humans. Other humans with ordinary talents were living their daily lives stuck at where they were.

There was a reason why Elcane was patronizing Vulcan.

It was only causing a problem to have a newbie human with protective blessing to ride on the airship.

‘But how... How could a human, when his protective blessing hasn’t worn off yet, have achieved such a height?’

Even Dragonians could not get strong this fast.

It was a maybe for a demi-god who had very thick blood of god flowing through.

Even among those people, only few that could be counted with fingers would have been able to achieve such.

‘Did he just say he is a Player... I have never seen one, but I have heard of them. However, I heard that they were weaker than ordinary humans...’

Elcane felt headache from convoluted thoughts. He leaned against the ledge on the airship in order to rest. However, Elcane could not rest easy.

Yet another wave of monsters was coming.

On top of that, it was in even greater numbers.

“What? This is crazy... Just what are they doing that’s making monsters swarm at us constantly?”

Because of his mind in chaos, Elcane’s words were crass.

Elcane picked up his bow, and Phantaero, who could not stop expressing his surprise about Vulcan, also assumed combat stance again.

“Vulcan, you were incredible. However, it is my turn this time.”

“I understand.”

Vulcan didn’t get greedy.

The mana was gradually replenishing, but it was not perfect yet.

Vulcan decided to leave this turn to Phantaero. He was thinking he should handle the next wave if there was going to be another one.

At that moment, Tolcas, who was sleeping until now, woke up.

“Ku~Haaam. Why has it gotten so noisy since a while back?”

Demi-god Tolcas stretched big as he raised his upper body.

He looked around the area and noticed that Vulcan had a protective blessing on his forehead. Surprised, he said,

“Uh! Hey! It’s still too dangerous for you to be on an airship!”

“Um. Thank you for your consideration. However, I have a reason. I must go.”

“Huh... In that case, it cannot be helped, still... Um? Why is there so many monsters coming this way?”

Tolcas directed his gaze toward the direction where Elcane was continuously shooting arrows toward.

Tolcas stretched out his neck far to the direction and stared. He turned his head to look at Vulcan and said,

“I see. Looks like I could have put a newbie in danger while sleeping away. I’ll handle everything from now on.”

Tolcas was looking at Vulcan with a look on his face. He was saying Vulcan could leave everything to him.



Panicking, Vulcan accepted.

“Ah, yes. Thank you...”

‘He is a bit of a fool. Is he like a greek demi-god?’

Vulcan noticed it when he met Lumitus. It seemed that gods or demi-gods were not always acting perfect despite their status.

Actually, they were lacking here and there, and that was making them more likable.

Although Vulcan exchanged only a few words with Tolcas, Vulcan was already finding him to be likable.

However, the look on Vulcan’s face hardened when he felt incredible energy from Tolcas.

It was overwhelming just like what Vulcan felt when Filder briefly showed his power to stop Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo from fighting. The pressure was comparable to that.

Vulcan stared intensely toward the source of the pressure.

Woooong.

It was a sword of light that originated from Tolcas' hand.

It was shining blindingly with blue hue. The Blue sword was soaring up toward the sky as if it didn't know the limit.

Wooong.

Woooooong.

The sword was beyond comparison from energy blade techniques by skilled Murim warriors at Act 1.

At best, their energy blades extended up to about a hundred feet. Vulcan almost felt sorry to even compare Tolcas' sword to what he remembered.

His sword extended over 1000 feet, exuding its magnificent might.

“...!”

Phantaero, Elcane and Vulcan were all at a loss for words. Meanwhile, several hundreds of monsters approached again.

However, when Tolcas the demi-god lightly swung his sword, the monsters became fine dusts and disappeared as if they never existed.

Faaaaaaa

Suuurururuk.

The sword of light disappeared after cleansing the area of all monsters.

Tolcas sighed big and looked at Vulcan.

“Haha. I over did it a bit because there are others watching. Was it good?”

“ ... ”

Vulcan looked at Tolcas in silence.

When it came to Elcane and Phantaero, Vulcan thought they were just a little bit stronger than himself. However, when it came to Tolcas, Vulcan felt that the scene demonstrated Tolcas was above and beyond Vulcan.

Having witnessed the power of a 851 level demi-god, it made Vulcan feel like he just ran into a wall.

‘I don’t think he is below The Six.’

Tolcas was probably weaker than Filder. However, Vulcan could

not imagine Tolcas losing easily against the rest of The Six.

Vulcan felt firsthand the might of a demi-god.

Vulcan said,

“Yes. It was beyond good... It was the best.”

“Haha! Thanks! Well, I only did what I should have.”

“ ... ”

“I’ll handle all monsters approaching us, so please be safe.”

Tolcas was embarrassed, but he still liked that Vulcan praised him.

The man was without falsehood. He seemed innocent, yet he possessed incredible power. Looking at Tolcas, Vulcan renewed his determination.

‘I am also more than capable of getting stronger. For me... this is the beginning.’

Until now, Vulcan firmly believed that his true power was above anyone who was at the same level as him.

Now, Vulcan came to accept the thought was just out of arrogance.

‘At best, I’m around equal with some of the other beings, but I’m definitely behind Dragonians or demi-gods.’

Vulcan faced the uncomfortable facts.

Vulcan’s face gradually petrified as if he pasted stone powder on his face.

However, this was not enough to make Vulcan fall into despair.

It just meant he had more levels to overcome. Vulcan still had the confidence to grow at a rate that was far superior to others.

‘I figured level 1000 would be enough, but that was just a miscalculation. In that case, I just need to get to 1100. It is definitely not impossible!’

Vulcan was going to continuously review and study the internal changes as he leveled up. This way, he believed that he will be able to grow without limit or running into a wall.

It just meant he needed a little more time.

Vulcan certainly could handle it.

Vulcan tightened his fist and made up his mind.

‘Even if it means making all monsters in Act 2 to go extinct... I’ll clear it.’

With a determined look on his face, following Tolcas, Vulcan looked up the wide sky.

Like that, two more days have passed, and they safely arrived at the west island.

# Chapter 58 - Blue Wind The Blue Dragon

---

Vulcan's group have arrived at the west island.

Leaving the airport, they walked along the path, but they ran into a turning point. It even had a post explaining what each path leads to. Looking at the post, Tolcas said,

“I'll be going to the rocky field. Is anyone interested in going there?”

“Um... By any chance, are you here to hunt the west island's giant?”

Elcane, the dark elf, asked respectfully. Tolcas responded to his question.

“That's right. I need to do at least that much to call it an achievement.”

Tolcas said it casually as if it was normal. Looking at Tolcas, Elcane was surprised.

The rocky field was one of the two biggest hunting grounds in the west island. Most of monsters there were not very powerful, but the rock giant, the boss monster, was a powerful bastard that even warriors in Act 2 who are considered as highly skilled were hesitant to fight.

There were even rumors about somewhat famous Dragonians that attempted to fight the rock giant and had to run with tails between their legs without getting anything in return.

Tolcas was talking about hunting the rock giant as if it was a chore dealing with pulling out a few weeds from the ground. It seemed Tolcas had rock solid balls.

“I’ll follow you, Mr. Tolcas.”

“Really? Did you have a business in that place?”

“That is not the case, but...”

Elcane blurred the end of the sentence.

His original plan was to hunt the monsters in the forest area and find useful herbs. On an impulse, he changed his mind.

It was because he wanted to see Tolcas in battle.

‘It’s hard to meet a demi-god as powerful as him. It would be a good experience.’

“Well, it doesn’t matter. Well then, El...”

“It’s Elcane.”



“I see. Elcane.”

Tolcas greeted Elcane with a smile.

Having set their destination, they said their goodbyes to Vulcan and Phantaero.

After Tolcas finished exchanging goodbyes, Elcane, who was staring at Vulcan, said,

“Vulcan.”

“Um?”

“What I said when I first met you, I apologize. You are powerful enough to be on the airship.”

“... I see.”

Elcane’s awkward apology.

Vulcan was not expecting him to apologize, so he replied with simple words, awkwardly.

With those words as the end, the two left the scene.

Watching Tolcas and Elcane slowly walking away, Vulcan said,

“I thought he wouldn’t because of pride, but he apologized.”

“Although they look down on humans a little, they respect skilled warriors. Actually, I also thought you were just being prideful at first.”

“Even so, my world’s fate is on my shoulders. I didn’t come here without confidence in myself.”

“Of course. A brave hero needs to know that his life is important! Although you are not a brave hero.”

Phantaero changed the subject.

“So, where are you headed? If it is about lightning magic... Forest area? If you burn them all with lightning, I think that would work.”

Vulcan shook his head.

What Phantaero said was true, and the forest area was also marked in Vulcan’s guidebook as the must-have course. However, there was something else that Vulcan had to attend to before that.

“I was thinking about going to see someone named Blue Dragon.”

Having heard what Vulcan said, Phantaero was shocked.

“What? How do you know that person?”

“I heard from the pub.”

Vulcan answered roughly. As if he understood, Phantaero said,

“Ah, I see. However, do you have anything you can trade with him?”

“I have some things I collected from Act 1.”

“Haha. Those marbles things are useless for humans. You said there weren’t any god-beasts or demon-beasts, right? It seems like they collected them all in your city.”

“We wondered if it might be good for something. I’m glad that I got to use it like this.”

Having said this much, Vulcan looked at Phantaero.

“By the way, Mr. Phantaero, you seem to be very interested in this. By any chance...”

“That’s right. I’m here for the same goal.”

Phantaero smiled big toward Vulcan and added,

“Looks like I won’t be bored along the way. Let’s go to see the Blue Dragon.”

---

Fundamentally, God-beasts or demon-beasts required very long time to reach new heights.

Far longer than high-monks doing training while facing walls, those beings, without resting, trained their mind and body.

Also, when their work reached a certain height, they were able to emerge from the shell of their former selves and become true gods.

However, there was one thing that helped them reach the height a little faster.

Once in a while, when an incredibly powerful monster got slayed and its stomach gutted, the marble of vitality could be obtained. It was like a recovery medicine made specially for god-beasts to help them recover and reach the height faster.

“If you think about it, he is a unique one. Other god-beasts hunt monsters themselves and collect the marbles. It’s hard to think about getting these marbles in exchange for lending god’s power.”

“... It sounds a little shady for a god-beast, but it certainly is a good method.”

“Right? Ever since the Blue Dragon started this, a few others started too, but there isn’t anyone that profited from it as much as he had, so... People come here often the most.”

Vulcan nodded.

When a store did well, there were others that mimicked the store, but they can’t beat the original.

Judging from Phantaero’s explanation, it seemed that was still the case in Act 2.

“Mr. Phantaero, what do you plan to get as the reward?”

“Um, the most usual kind of reward. The Blue Dragon’s breath.”

“The Blue Dragon’s breath?”

“Ah, you don’t know? To put it simply, you can think of it as a boost. Attack power, defensive power, recovery rate, speed, etc. All abilities are enhanced. Depending on the amount of vitality marbles, I heard that some people have gotten so strong that they almost became someone else.”

He snorted and said in a serious tone,

“With the Blue Dragon’s Breath on my back, I plan to really go look for the holy sword.”

Phantaero sounded serious. It even exuded a sense of determination and bravery.

Vulcan asked carefully,

“The holy sword must be somewhere very dangerous.”

“I don’t know where it is exactly. However, the places that might have it are all difficult for me to handle.”

“... I hope you will obtain what you want.”

Vulcan said with a serious face.

Phantaero also looked at Vulcan with a serious look.

A moment of silence had past, and Phantaero changed the atmosphere with his bright tone of voice.

“Haha. I’m sorry. I try not to, but I get too serious sometimes. If other brave warriors do this, just stop them right away. Well, other brave warriors beside me are mostly dead.”

“You sure talk casually about something so serious.”

“Did I? I’m sorry. By the way, what kind of reward do you

want?”

“Hm, I don’t know for certain. I was going to decide that after consulting the Blue Dragon.”

Having heard what Vulcan said, Phantaero cringed.

“What? Were you expecting the Blue Dragon to do a custom service just for you?”

“Yes, exactly.”

“Hm, I think you are expecting too much...”

Phantaero shook his head left and right and said,

“Unless you bring him the amount or quality to satisfy the Blue Dragon, you may get banned, or you will be sent to his pupil instead. That’s what I’ve heard.”

“It’s all right. I think I have enough to meet him at least.”

“Huh, oh my. Even if you gathered them from Act 1, they are probably lacking in quality...”

Phantaero thought Vulcan was full of air.

However, he didn't say that out loud to spoil Vulcan's mood.

‘He will realize it once he gets there.’

Having thought this, Phantaero casually changed the subject to something else.

Phantaero brought up all sorts of useless topics.

Vulcan also brought up conversation worthy topics.

However, he had a pretty good idea why Phantero changed the subject.

‘He can't understand why a newbie, who doesn't have much, is so confident.’

Vulcan didn't bother showing off the number of vitality marbles that he had.

Phantero was going to realize it once he got there.

---

“This is not enough.”

It was a very machine-like and business-like tone.

A fox-demon, the one tending the counter, looked at the



customer with a cold look.

“Kuk. This isn’t enough...”

“Yes. If you will be okay with me giving you the reward, I could.”

“Ah... You can give me something like the Blue Dragon’s breath?”

“I’m far inferior to the master. If the boost is what you want... You can maintain this much for one year.”

The fox-demon brought her palm toward her lips.

With a smooch sound, she opened her palm toward the customer, and pink-colored energy surrounded the man’s entire body.

The man felt a mysterious power surging up through his body. Impressed, he tried making and opening his fists.

‘This is not bad!’

His body definitely felt lighter than before.

However, the boost’s duration was very short.

Disappointed, the man sighed. The fox-demon said to the man,

“Will you deal with this? As I said earlier, it will last for one year.”

“I will. Of course I will.”

The fox-demon consumed the vitality marbles inside the bag.

Feeling the power filling up inside her, she moaned seductively.

The man who handed her the bag panicked and took a few steps back.

A few seconds had passed. Pink-colored energy that came out of the fox-demon’s mouth surrounded the man’s entire body.

The fox-demon’s energy gradually got absorbed into the man’s body.

“Ohoh...!”

“It’s complete. Please have a safe journey back.”

The fox-demon, returning to her business attitude again, called for the next customer.

Step, step...

With proud steps, Phantaero walked toward the counter.

Meanwhile, Vulcan looked at the fox-demon.

‘She is pretty.’

She had voluptuous breasts and tiny waist.

She had the allure of a beautiful women in late 20s.

Power to mesmerize people could be felt from her nine tails waving in he air.

However, she didn’t seem to be in good health.

Perhaps it was due to the vitality marbles, her appearance seemed lively. However, she seemed exhausted somehow.

She made Vulcan think of a working girl who pulled night shifts two nights in a row.

[Demon-beast Fox-demon, Ryur-ryul]

[721Lv]

‘It looks like there really are a lot of people coming to see the Blue Dragon.’

Vulcan figured she is exhausted from having had to meet the customers without taking breaks. Vulcan asked Phantaero,

“Will you be going first?”

“Um, should I?”

‘If Vulcan went first and gets rejected, it would be awkward for him to wait while I do my dealing...’

Phantaero went first because he was trying to be considerate to Vulcan.

Phantaero, with a confident look, untied a pouch from his waist.

It had a space expansion magic cast on.

With an emotionless face, the fox-demon said to Phantaero,

“Please pour them out.”

“Um, I have a lot, so they would be too much to pour out here.”

“In that case, I’ll bring a box. Is that one big enough?”

The fox-demon used her tail to point at a box.

It was big enough to squeeze in an adult man.

Phantaero brought the box himself and poured the vitality marbles from the pouch.

Chwarururururu.

At an instant, the box became almost full of marbles.

Most of them was about the size of a plum, but there were a few apple sized ones here and there.

The fox-demon’s eyes were beaming.

“What do you think? With this much, the Blue Dragon himself will give me the breath himself, right?”

“... Certainly, yes. You must have worked very hard to gather them all.”

“Haha, it was pretty hard. Now, please call the Blue Dragon.”

“All right. Please wait...”

She put her hand between her breast and brought out a clear orb. She tossed the orb to the floor.

The orb, which was rolling, eventually stopped, and it exuded blue light as it gradually turned into a form of human.

Wooooong...

A moment later, the Blue Dragon made an entrance.

He was an old man dressed much like Baek Ja-gyeong from Act 1.

[God-beast Blue Dragon, Blue Wind]

[997Lv]

Vulcan was not surprised about the level.

From what Haywood said, even 700 years ago, he was around the same level as The Six.

However, Vulcan was a little disappointed that he didn't get to see the magnificent look of a dragon.

‘I was hoping he would show up in his dragon form, not human form.’

The Blue Dragon didn’t care if Vulcan was disappointed or not. With a gentle look on his face, he glanced at the vitality marbles in the box and looked at Phantaero.

“20 years worth of breath as the reward, do you accept?”

“Uh... Is that what...”

“This is what you get.”

The Blue Dragon pointed at Phantaero and exuded power.

Phantaero received the Blue Dragon’s Breath before he had time to even think about refusing. Phantaero was shocked.

However, he soon realized his power had increased significantly. With a surprised look on his face, he looked around his body.

Vulcan also scanned Phantaero.

He figured he would be able to determine the changes.

[Hegatus’ brave hero, Phantaero]

[759(+ 30)Lv]

‘Ridiculous. It is not a temporary boost. It will last for 20 years, yet...’

It was too great of boost to be something that was to last 20 years.

Vulcan was not the only one that was shocked.

Phantaero, who was experiencing the Blue Dragon’s Breath, could not close his dropped jaw.

Shuuuuk.

“At.”

“What do you think? Do you accept?”

The Blue Dragon, having retrieved the power, asked again briefly.

Phantaero thought about it hard for a moment and said,

“Excuse me... If you could give me the best quality, what would be the duration?”



“I can’t give you the best quality with these vitality marbles. The kind of power being used for the reward is at a whole another dimension.”

“In that case... I understand. I’ll accept this one.”

The Blue Dragon was talking like a stingy old man. Watching the Blue Dragon, Vulcan complained inside.

He had high hopes for the Blue Dragon because he was supposed to be a holy being. However, it seemed the Blue Dragon was more exploitive than Jake.

‘Ah, I think it would be frustrating if he acts like that with me.’

Vulcan lightly furrowed his brow.

While Vulcan was thinking about all this, Phantaero and the Blue Dragon’s trade was completed.

It seemed Phantaero was a little disappointed that he didn’t get the best quality. Still, he looked satisfied to some extent.

The Blue Dragon also seemed satisfied for having acquired a large quantity of quality vitality marbles. He was about to leave.

Of course, Vulcan was not going to just sit and watch him leave.

“Excuse me, please wait, Sir Blue Dragon!”

The Blue Dragon casually turned his head and looked at Vulcan.

Having confirmed the shining mark on Vulcan’s forehead, the Blue Dragon cringed big.

Vulcan added in a hurry,

“I have a lot! Really! Please don’t get mad. Please, for a moment, just for a moment!”

# Chapter 59 - Blue Wind The Blue Dragon

## (Part 2)

---

Having heard Vulcan's desperate voice, Ryur-yul, the fox demon, lightly sighed. Having had worked under the Blue Dragon for over a hundred years to handle chores for him, she had seen all sorts of things.

There were people making unreasonable demands with pathetic amount of vitality marbles that weren't even worth as a snack for her, let alone the Blue Dragon himself. There were also some that begged Blue Dragon to take them as students.

However, there never was anyone like Vulcan showing up with a protective blessing still hanging on the forehead and asking to trade so confidently.

'Seriously, why is he so confident? At most, he probably just has a pouch worth of marbles collected from Act 1.'

That was assuming he worked diligently in Act 1 to collect them. It was extremely likely that most newbies would not even have that. Ryur-yul quickly came out of the counter and walked toward Vulcan.

'I can't even imagine how the master will react to this one. He just might laugh out loud and leave, but he might also get infuriated and destroy this place... I should handle this before it gets to that...'

At that moment, the marbles were pouring out from Vulcan's inventory.

Chuarururururururuk.

“ ... ”

Ryur-yul stopped where she stood and vacantly stared at the marbles.

Marbles were pouring out endlessly. It was incredible.

At an instant, Vulcan completely filled the box that looked just like the one Phantaero used. Vulcan asked Blue Wind the Blue Dragon,

“I'll be using a few more boxes.”

“Uh? O... okay. As you wish.”

Excited, Vulcan got a few more boxes of similar sizes and poured in more marbles into them.

Chuarururururururuk.

The sounds of marbles colliding with each other were heard

endlessly.

One, two, five, ten, twenty... total of twenty-one boxes were completely filled. Vulcan looked at the Blue Dragon.

“Are they enough to trade with you directly?”

“ ... ”

Silence was flowing through the area.

Everyone had a lot in their minds to say, but nobody could quite get their heads around the situation, so they couldn't make any comment.

In particular, Ryur-yul, the fox demon, forgot about putting up her business-like expression on her face. She just stared at the boxes with a vacant look.

‘What in the world? Seriously!’

Although she was well aware that they were for her master, she could not help but to drool over them.

The marbles' quality was not impressive.

Most of them were about half an inch in diameter. There were a

few chestnut sized ones. The quality was definitely inferior to what Phantaero brought earlier.

However, the quantity was overwhelming the quality.

‘100 years? No, I’m don’t know!’

Ryur-yul thought about how long it would take to gather this many marbles. She stopped thinking about it and looked at her master.

Instead of his usual calculating and nick-picky self, the Blue Dragon also looked quite shocked.

“... You... Did you gather these marbles from Act 1?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“I figured as much. They are a lot smaller than ones from Act 2. However... There are a lot of them. Really, a lot. It’s to the point that I’m having a hard time understanding how you gathered this many.”

The Blue Dragon shook his head.

After a moment of pause, he said,

“Can you give me a moment?”

“Okay.”

“Follow me.”

Blue Wind collected the marbles and slowly walked away.

However, each of his steps resulted in traveling over 300 ft.

Vulcan got to witness the land-fold technique for the first time. Impressed, he quickly ran to follow Blue Wind.

After a short-while, they arrived at a seat on top of a small mountain. Sitting at the seat, Blue Wind went straight to the point.

“How did you collect them?”

“It’s not something you can do. In Act 2, it is a method that only I can do.”

“Explain in a way that would make sense.”

‘He is impatient. Actually, maybe it is no surprise considering what I brought?’

Vulcan took a moment to organize what he wanted to explain.

“I’m a Player.”

“...!”

“I don’t know about where you were when you were in Act 1. By any chance, have you ever seen a Player?”

Blue Wind responded as he fiddled with his chin.

“I have seen one. I also know that Players get stronger by slaying monsters, and they also gain all sorts of items from doing so. So, it seems like vitality marbles also fall from slaying monsters regardless of which one you kill.”

“That’s right.”

“Huh, geez. In the past 2000 years, I have never seen a Player in Act 2. A Player...”

Blue Wind looked up the sky and mumbled.

Vulcan waited until he finished thinking.

After a moment, he said,

“Instead of trading on per occasion basis, let’s make a contract.”



‘All right.’

Blue Dragon brought up the idea that Vulcan was going to suggest.

Vulcan hid how excited he was. Vulcan asked,

“If you mean by a contract, do you want to trade more in a steady pace from now on?”

“That’s right. Bring me all of the vitality marbles that you will be getting from now on. I’ll give you a fitting reward for them.”

Blue Wind brought out a wooden doll that was shaped like a bird.

When he injected mana into the wooden doll, it became a living bird with flesh and flew to Vulcan’s shoulder.

“Feed me! Feed me!”

Vulcan examined the bird using the SYSTEM.

[A Special Item – Beast Bird Kina Kina]

\*A mysterious bird that is connected spiritually to Blue Wind. Ordinarily, it is in the shape of a wooden bird, but it transforms to its living form when mana is injected to it. From a remote distance, it can deliver vitality marbles to Blue Wind the Blue Dragon and receive the rewards. If it is annoying, it can be reverted back to its wooden form by retrieving the mana injected to it.

“You are probably reading information about it, right? What do you think? Do you understand what it is for?”

“Looks like you know about Players very well.”

“You are the third one that I have actually seen in person, but because Players have such unique abilities, I remember them. Anyway, what would you do? If you are going to make a contract with me, I’ll give you Kina Kina. You can get rewards proportional to the amount of vitality marbles you send me.”

Having heard Blue Wind’s explanation, Vulcan asked what he was most curious about.

“Is the Blue Dragon’s Breath the only thing I can get as the reward? The Blue Dragon’s Breath is nice, but I was wondering if you could help me in other ways as well.”

“Tell me what you want. I can’t grant you big ones like Act 1 or Act 2’s reward wish, but I could provide a lot of help when it comes to things related to combat.”

“Um... Instead of a steady boost like the Blue Dragon’s Breath, is there something that could give me an incredible amount of boost for a short duration? Something that would be like a triumph card in case of danger?”

“Hm...”

“Well, for instance, if you could be summoned to where I am for a moment, or... a power far greater than the Blue Dragon’s Breath for a short duration... Something like that would be best.”

When Vulcan was making the guidebook, there was one thing that Vulcan had been thinking as the most important factor.

It was his ‘safety.’

Back in Beloong City, Vulcan was able to start hunting while being more than powerful enough to handle it. This was all thanks to the support of The Six. However, in Act 2, hunting like that was not possible.

Even the protective blessing was only for 10 years.

After that, Vulcan was going to be thrown in to Act 2, a world full of thousand different dangers.

Because of this, Vulcan was actively seeking ways to ensure safety before the 10-year period ran out, and he thought about using vitality marbles and borrow the Blue Dragon’s strength.

‘The Blue Dragon’s Breath is more than sufficient, but, if possible, I might as well get something that’s like a spare life.’

Having thought this far, Vulcan steadily looked at Blue Wind.

He was in deep thoughts while tapping at the seat.

It seemed like he did have a way, but it seemed Blue Wind was wondering if it was going to be worth what Vulcan could provide in terms of vitality marbles.

‘Seriously, he is not a god beast. He is more like a merchant, a merchant.’

For about a minute, Blue Wind the Blue Dragon didn’t say a word.

Finally, he had a look on his face that indicated he came to a conclusion. He said,

“I do have a perfect method for what you were saying.”

“What is it?”

“Feed the vitality marbles to the doll and say ‘Summon Enlightened Beings.’ If you do, for a moment, beings from the Enlightened World will be summoned to this world to help you.

Their number and strength will depend on the amount and quality of the vitality marbles, so consider it carefully.”

‘It’s like using an expendable item. It’s not bad.’

It was not as good as having a god on his side, but being able to borrow 500 – 900 level enlightened being’s power was going to be extremely helpful.

‘Although I wouldn’t know how much of vitality marbles will be needed.’

As for that, Vulcan figured he will need to just be diligent about collecting the marbles.

Vulcan finished thinking about it. In a refreshing tone, Vulcan said to Blue Wind,

“All right. I’ll sign the contract.”

“You made a wise choice. Don’t tell anyone we made this contract. If you do, I won’t go easy on you.”

Vulcan made an exaggerated face and waved his hands.

“I will never do that.”

“I’ll trust you. Now, what should we do about the marbles that you brought? Should I give you the Blue Dragon’s Breath?”

“Um... If I use them all, how much will I be able to get?”

“For the quality version, 120 years. If you want the best quality version, 2 years. You have brought a lot more than the other guy, but the quality is lacking, so those are the best you can get for the marbles you brought.”

Having heard what Blue Wind said, Vulcan thought hard about it for a moment. For now, Vulcan decided to trade enough marbles for a 20-years’ worth of quality breath.

Blue Wind raised his finger and cast the boost on Vulcan. Blue Wind said,

“Are you going to use the rest later?”

“Yes, I plan on saving them for later in case of an emergency.”

“Do as you like. I hope that emergency comes soon.”

‘Why don’t you just curse me, gosh.’

“It was an honor meeting you.”

Vulcan, who was now surrounded by the Blue Dragon's Breath, said with a smile.

---

Step, step...

Phantaero was walking with a face that looked as if he just lost his soul.

Vulcan, who was walking next to him, asked,

“Mr. Phantaero, why do you have a blank look on your face?”

Phantaero's gaze turned toward Vulcan slowly.

With a confused look, he asked Vulcan,

“Just how did you manage to collect so many marbles?”

“Ah, about that...”

‘Looks like he doesn't know much about Players.’

The responses from both Blue Wind and Phantaero were same. They both said that Players are harder to run into than demi-gods or Dragonians.

‘Could it be that there were just many of them gathered in

Beloong City?’

On top of that, there never was a Player who was powerful enough to come to Act 2. It was understandable why Phantaero didn’t know much about Players.

Vulcan slowly explained who Players were.

Phantaero was very surprised and also very intrigued.

Phantaero was more surprised than how Vulcan was when Vulcan heard the explanation about brave heroes.

Having heard Vulcan’s explanation to the very end, impressed, Phantaero clapped and said,

“Wow, gosh. To think such a mysterious race existed.”

“Well, Players are human.”

“Is that so? It is like how I am a human and a brave hero. Ha... Really, Players have incredible abilities. Getting stronger by slaying monsters is incredible on its own, but they also get items from doing that?”

“Despite having such abilities, most Players are weak. There is no need to envy them.”



“Still, you are strong, aren’t you?”

Having heard what Phantaero said, Vulcan blinked his eyes several times, confused.

Vulcan looked like he was not expecting to hear that.

“Do you think I’m strong?”

“Yes. You are strong. You think you are weak?”

Phantaero scratched his head and continued.

“It’s been only a few days since we met, but you seem to underestimate yourself too much. If I were you, I would act with a bit more confidence.”

“However, there are so many here that are stronger than me.”

“That is true. However, they were all greenhorns when they first arrived at Act 2.”

“ ... ”

Vulcan was at a loss for words.

To Vulcan, Phantaero said in a warm, caring tone.

“You don’t need to shrivel. You are strong enough, and you are probably ranked as the number one among all rookies. I guarantee it. So, act with confidence. Of course, you should still be respectful.”

Having finished what he wanted to tell Vulcan, Phantaero raised his power of the brave hero.

Warm orange colored energy and the Blue Dragon’s Breath’s blue energy mixed together to create a mysterious atmosphere.

“Well then, this is where we part ways.”

“Are you going to leave the island?”

“That’s right. I got what I needed from here. I no longer need to be in this place. You have more businesses here, right?”

“Right. I was thinking about going to the forest area.”

Phantaero nodded and extended his right arm.

Vulcan also extended his arm. They firmly shook hands. While shaking hands, Phantaero said in energetic tone,

“It was great meeting you. Let’s travel together again later if we get a chance.”

“It was great meeting you too, Mr. Phantaero.”

Having finished with handshake, Phantaero quickly left.

“ ... ”

Vulcan, now alone, stood there and thought about what Phantaero said.

‘I’m strong? I certainly am. Only handful of people can go to Act 1, and only a select few can go to Act 2 from there. I have strength far surpassing all rookies in Act 2. Still, I never thought of myself as strong. Why should I? There are fiends with level 800 or 900 here.’

Vulcan knew that Phantaero was trying to inspire confidence in Vulcan, but Vulcan could not quite agree.

He still found himself to be lacking. There were many holes to be filled.

Vulcan concluded that underestimating his own strength was actually not a bad thing.

‘A slight sense of feeling inferior to others is necessary to fuel the desire to work hard.’

Before he realized, Vulcan was already at the diverging point on the pathway. Vulcan looked at the post that indicated the destination of each path.

Looking at the post that described the direction to the forest area, Vulcan got rid of all miscellaneous thoughts and ran toward there in full speed.

‘Let’s just shut up and level up.’

At the forest area, the place that Vulcan marked as his first hunting ground, Vulcan’s hunting began.

# Chapter 60 - Surpassing

---

The forest was so wide that its boundaries could not be seen even from high up in the sky. Trees substantially thicker than ones found in lower dimensions were packed in the forest.

Also, among those trees, there were existences exuding their uniqueness.

Guuuuurrr.

Psushususuk.

There was a large tree with circumference of ten men's arm spans.

The tree moved like a wild beast and used its vines to attack Vulcan.

[Ancient War Tree]

[600Lv]

However, not a vine managed to touch Vulcan.

To begin with, 600 level monsters had difficult time to catch up

to Vulcan’s speed.

Also, war trees were not the type of monster that excelled in speed.

War trees were among the slower ones in 600 level monsters. It couldn’t even manage to catch Vulcan’s shadow.

It wasn’t like the war tree’s best abilities were being utilized either. It had incredible physical endurance and defense. Pure martial warriors who can’t use magic considered the war trees to be on the top of the list of monsters to avoid. However, to Vulcan’s flame magic, it was just a large firewood.

Inside overlapped Firefields, the war tree roared in pain and disappeared after becoming experience points for Vulcan.

[Experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

“As I thought, this place is very efficient. I get to have a monopoly in this place because nobody is around too.”

Vulcan looked very happy. He mumbled as he picked up the item.

Monsters in the forest area were weak against Vulcan in many ways. They were weak against flame magic, and they were also weak against lightning because it generated high heat. The monsters were cooked so easily.

Moreover, there wasn't anyone around to compete for monsters.

For martial warriors, they didn't visit the place after rumors spread that the monsters here won't die easily despite being slow, that it was like 'punching on sandbags.'

Flame based mages came to visit the place once in a while for herbs, but they ended up burning everything in the process, including herbs, and leaving empty handed. So, even they started to stop coming.

'However, none of those matter to me.'

Vulcan's goal wasn't training. He was here to gain experience points.

The war trees were like firewood that died quietly. Vulcan welcomed such monsters.

Things like herbs were also not problems to Vulcan.

It was because items dropped no matter how Vulcan killed the trees, whether by fire or gently.

With a satisfied face, Vulcan looked at the items that the war tree dropped and then directed his gaze toward another prey.

There were four war trees there, but Vulcan didn't feel uneasy about it at all.

‘I'm currently at level 474... I think I'll stay here until I get to mid level 500. Let's suck the honey out of this place!’

Vulcan laughed big time.

Vulcan poured out magic toward war trees. His face was full of ambition and greed.

[Your experience points went up.]

[Your experience points went up.]

[Zenith Mage Swordsman Vulcan]

[499(+ 30)Lv]

“Phew, I'm at 99% with the experience points. Just a little more and I'll be at 500!”



Vulcan shouted in excitement.

Under normal circumstances, Vulcan would have said it quietly to avoid provoking other monsters nearby. However, he had no reason to do so now.

Vulcan turned his head left and right and looked around the scenery.

It was all black.

As far as he could see, all around him was turned into ashes.

It was as if the place was bombarded by lightning and flame from the sky. It was desolate.

Obviously, there was no sign of any monsters around.

In order to hunt quickly, Vulcan had been shooting magic indiscriminately. He had been replenishing depleted mana by excessive use of mana potions. Two months and a half had gone by like that.

Vulcan leveled up at a pace almost on par with how it was in the Abandoned Dungeon.

“Phew... Should I take a break?”

Vulcan plummeted to the ground to lie down. He looked up at the blue sky.

He thought about drinking a mana potion, but he decided not to.

It seemed its effectiveness was diminishing due to excessive consumption in such a short duration of time.

‘It’s comfortable.’

Vulcan spent a leisurely time.

His mana, which was showing its bottom at the moment, was rising frustratingly slow. However, it didn’t matter.

He was mentally exhausted anyway. He needed some rest.

‘Ah, right. Perhaps I should try summoning?’

It was something he hadn’t thought about lately.

Vulcan was provoked to level up after seeing demi-gods and other kinds. He was so focused on leveling up that he had forgotten about it. Now that he had time to spare, it occurred to him naturally.

Vulcan brought out Kina Kina the beast bird.

Upon injecting it with mana, the wooden doll Kina Kina became a living crown parrot. It started to circle the area.

“Feed me! Feed me!”

Vulcan poked at the parrot’s cool looking golden crown and thought hard about what to do next.

‘How many should I feed him?’

This was just a test, so Vulcan thought there was no need to give many.

Vulcan brought out a small thumb sized vitality marble and put it in Kina Kina’s mouth.

“More, more!”

“Stand still. Summon Enlightened Being!”

Having heard Vulcan’s words, Kina Kina suddenly stopped moving.

It started to shake and exude white mist from its mouth. After a moment passed, the mist clumped together to form letters.

Much like Beloong City's Wikicrystal, it formed a user interface menu. Vulcan was impressed.

"This is intriguing. It's convenient to use."

Vulcan mumbled and looked at the Enlightened Being list.

[List of Enlightened Beings that could be summoned]

1. Lowest ranked battle god (Duration: 1s)

\*There isn't enough vitality marbles. In order to increase the duration or summon a higher ranked Enlightened Being, you need more vitality marbles.

Having noticed there was just the lowest ranked battle god in the list, Vulcan cringed.

However, he considered the amount that he fed Kina Kina and quickly accepted the outcome.

'Actually, it was wrong of me to expect a big reward for feeding it just one marble.'

Vulcan didn't feed Kina Kina any more marbles and just summoned.

It was going to be just one second, so he wasn't going to have a chance to talk to the summoned being, but it was going to be enough to examine the level.

Vulcan was curious how powerful the lowest ranked battle god was.

Shuuuuk.

A semi-transparent object came out of beast bird Kina Kina.

Vulcan checked the Enlightened Being's level first before the face.

[Lowest Ranked Battle God Dokgo Hoo]

[541Lv]

“... Huh?”

Vulcan vacantly looked at the level, but he said,

“Ah!”

Vulcan quickly turned his gaze.

He could barely see a middle-aged man's face in middle of the mist. However, he disappeared quickly.

[the time limit is up. The summoning had been canceled.]

Shooook.

The Enlightened Being was sucked back into Kina Kina's mouth.

Vulcan panicked and stood there for a moment. He opened the inventory and brought out vitality marbles.

Kina Kina now consumed many vitality marbles.

Vulcan shouted, 'Summon Enlightened Being' quickly before Kina Kina could yap away.

Kina Kina spat out semi-transparent letters again, and Vulcan selected the lowest ranked battle god again.

There was no need to worry about the summoned being disappearing right away since Vulcan fed the bird many marbles this time.

Vulcan was surprised, but he was also glad to see the summoned being.

The lowest ranked battle god Dokgo Hoo was also looking at Vulcan.

- What's this? I thought a god beast summoned me, but it is you, Little Brother. How did you do it?

“Haha, it's great to see you, Big Brother.”

Vulcan thought it would be very hard to see him again.

It was by a coincidence on top of coincidence that led to this. Vulcan was overjoyed. Vulcan and Dokgo Hoo chatted for a while.

The two had many things to talk about.

Vulcan explained how his world was destroyed and the things about Act 2 in a row. Dokgo Hoo also poured out stories and complaints about a unique dimension called Enlightened World.

Foul language started to pour out from Dokgo Hoo.

- That bastard Yur Dong-bin! He definitely hates me! He is good to other runts because they are kissing his butt. He is making me organize Go board instead! So what if he is a god of blades? So what if he is the highest ranked Enlightened Being!

“Still, you are the youngest and the newest there, so maybe it is just where you start?”

- What! Even if I'm a rookie, nobody can treat me that way! I'm at a whole another height from other Enlightened Beings of same rank!

Vulcan glanced at Dokgo Hoo's level again.

It was definitely higher than before. However, it seemed that was not enough to give him a special treatment.

‘Could it be... that Enlightened Beings are significantly more powerful than humans even if they are at the same level?’

Vulcan was suddenly curious. With his finger, he pointed to a distance.

There was an ancient war tree that was regenerated just now.

“In that case, can you show me your power? It's has been a while. I think that tree will be enough to demonstrate your strength.”

- Hm! Are you patronizing me? It looks like one of those max level trees from Act 1. It's just a small fry. I'll turn it into firewood this instant.



Dokgo Hoo approached the war tree at an incredible speed.

Vulcan shook his head left and right and followed after him.

‘He became an Enlightened Being, yet he still has that short-temper. I thought it would get better.’

Vulcan even thought that Dokgo Hoo could become more powerful than himself if Dokgo Hoo learned flame and lightning magic.

- You runt! You are just a tree, but you dare to attack humans? Taste the power of Blade God Dokgo Hoo!

Kuuuuuwaaaaa.

The ancient war tree got angry for being attacked all of sudden.

Sharp vines came out of its body and charged toward Dokgo Hoo from all directions.

- Huap!

Slash!

The war tree’s level was higher than Dokgo Hoo by 60 levels. However, Dokgo Hoo was able to cut through the vines

effortlessly. Vulcan was impressed.

‘He is stronger than I thought? It is not a huge difference, but as I thought, it feels like he is stronger than humans.’

Vulcan, in a relaxed pose, watched the battle between Dokgo Hoo and the war tree.

Even if Dokgo Hoo received a serious damage and the summoning got canceled from it, his actual body was not going to receive any damage.

Their battle didn’t come to an end easily. Neither side had a way to deal sufficient damage to each other.

The war tree’s vines, which was its only offensive measure, were being chopped off by Dokgo Hoo’s flashy swordplay.

Meanwhile, Dokgo Hoo was lacking in strength to cut through the war tree’s body.

Vulcan could see that Dokgo Hoo was trying very hard with all of his might, but it seemed it was going to be difficult for him to deal a decisive damage to the tree.

Vulcan watched the battle for a moment longer. Having felt that the summoning duration was almost up, Vulcan called Dokgo Hoo.

“Big Brother, I’m sorry, but it is almost time for you to go back.”

- What? Rascal? No! Increase the duration! I’m going to finish this one before I go!

Vulcan promptly shook his head.

“No. I would not have used so many marbles to begin with if it wasn’t for you. Ah, there are only 5 seconds left.”

- No! Hey! You rascal!

“Well then, I’ll see you again next time, Big Brother.”

[The time limit is up. The summoning had been canceled.]

Shook.

Dokgo Hoo disappeared to Kina Kina. Looking at it, Vulcan peeked a smile.

“I guess I won’t be bored from now on. I think I’ll summon him whenever I think of him.”

Dokgo Hoo was currently the lowest ranked battle god, so

summoning him didn't require a large amount of marbles.

Vulcan thought he should use the vitality marbles occasionally from now on. As he thought that, he used several Firefields.

Kuwowowowoook.

Having lost the opponent it was fighting, the war tree aimed its vines at Vulcan. However, Vulcan avoided the attacks easily with his lightning dragon step techniques, and the war tree slowly died from being burned to crisp.

The war tree's vines were burned off like curled fries and died.

[Your experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

“All right! I'm at level 500 finally!”

Shouting in excitement, Vulcan examined his status screen.

[Ultra-Zenith Mage Swordsman Vulcan]

“Ku.... I’m a Ultra-Zenith now. I like it.”

Although just a word was added to the title, Vulcan felt great.

It felt like he reached a new height.

The level was still substantially lower than his true abilities, but it was still a good news to feel great about.

‘Even Bellon and Ho-gyeong had titles of Ultra-Zenith. It wouldn’t make much sense for me to not have it. Of course.’

Vulcan calmed himself and closed his eyes. He started to examine his internal states.

It was time for Vulcan to thoroughly examine his body’s development and plan his future development’s direction.

It was a moment that Vulcan thought of as the most important time. Because of this, he was so focused on it that ordinarily noise from the surrounding didn’t bother him.

However, there was a sound that even he could not ignore.

Ding!

It was a sudden notification alarm from the SYSTEM.

Vulcan’s eyes opened wide.

[You have achieved level 500!]

[Congratulations! You have obtained a chance to choose a profession!]

[Speak the one you wish, and it will become your profession.]

[If you would like to know more about a particular profession, please hold your gaze steady at the one you want.]

- 1. Super-human (Unlocked)
- 2. Enlightened Being (Locked. Currently forfeited)
- 3. Brave Warrior (Unlocked)
- 4. Demi-God (Unlocked)

“ ... ”

‘A profession? What... is this?’

Vulcan was at a loss for words.

It was completely unexpected.

It was making his head complicated with thoughts

## Chapter 61 - Surpassing (Part 2)

---

Until now, the concept of profession didn't exist.

The title was applied automatically depending on the specialties learned.

Vulcan's title was swordsman when he only used swords. When he obtained a skill-book and learned magic, his title became mage swordsman.

This was the first time for Vulcan to be asked to choose a profession.

‘Let's take a look.’

Vulcan was not sure about this whole profession thing yet. He decided to take a close look at each option.

[Super human]

A human that has exceeded beyond the limit of human beings.

In the basis, everything is still the same as being a human. However, the growth rate is very different. After level 500, each level up comes with greater stat increases in comparison



to how things were as a normal human.

\*Condition for activating: Achieve level 500 (Completed)

[Enlightened Being]

A being from the Enlightened World.

Surpass mankind and become an Enlightened Being. Enter the Enlightened World.

You can use special abilities that you could not have obtained from being a human.

\*Condition for activating: Choose the path of an Enlightened Being after clearing Act 1 (Not completed)

[Brave Hero]

A human being with the fate of the lower dimension on the shoulders.

You can borrow strengths from all people in the lower dimension. Greater power can be utilized if there are more people or their will is stronger.

\*Condition for activating: Achieve level 500. The lower

dimension in danger. (Completed)

[Demi-god]

A great existence.

It is a step before becoming a god. It is definitely an existence who is above humans. Great power can be used depending on the exploits accomplished.

\*Condition for activating: Achieve level 500. Growth rate surpassing humans. (Completed)

‘Instead of calling it a change in profession... It’s almost like changing what kind of being I am.’

To avoid monsters that were being regenerated one by one, Vulcan decided to move to a safe place.

With a serious face, Vulcan looked at the SYSTEM window again.

‘Anyway, this is definitely a good thing.’

No matter which one he chose, there was going to be a big advantage, and there was very little disadvantage.

In fact, if he didn't include the condition about having have to go to the Enlightened World for the Enlightened Being option, all of these were as good as saying there were no disadvantages.

Vulcan closed his eyes.

He thought about the few that he got to meet ever since he came to Act 2. He also thought about how their superiority, stemming from the difference in their kinds, was making him feel inferior.

‘That difference will disappear in an instant with this profession option.’

This was like having gold drop from the sky.

Vulcan always thought having SYSTEM was like being able to cheat. However, he never felt so strongly about it as now. This was totally cheating, big time.

‘I was a fool to be envious of other beings when I have a cheat like this...’

Vulcan was getting so excited. He tried to calm himself down.

This was certainly like finding a large lump of gold on the street. However, some of the choices were like 14k, and others were like pure gold

Vulcan thought about which one would give him the greatest power. However, it didn't take him very long to decide.

With a serious face, Vulcan nodded once and said,

“Number four. I choose Demi-god.”

[You have chosen Demi-god]

[The transformation will commence]

Woooooong.

Notification could be heard. Golden light exuded from Vulcan.

Soon, the light became intense, enough to surround his entire body. With the light, Vulcan's body transformed.

It became stronger and more divine.

It was like how martial warriors go through enlightenment. Vulcan's body was transforming into a vessel that contained the power of a demi-god.

Duduk. Dudududuk.

[Transformation to your profession is complete]

[If you give up your profession, you will lose everything and become human at level 1. Please be careful.]

‘Why would I ever do that? That’s insane. I will if I want to give up and go commit suicide.’

Finally, the profession was set.

Vulcan slowly turned his head and examined his body.

Appearance wise, there was no difference.

However, inside, he could feel the divine power pumping through his body through the heart.

Gods were the existence that all demons feared.

A demi-god was close to that, and Vulcan transformed into one. Satisfied, Vulcan said,

“I don’t quite feel a big difference yet.”

However, he figured that was obvious.

He carefully read the part about ‘exploits’ in the description about Demi-god.

[Exploits]

A Demi-god must accomplish these to prove greatness.

The exploits points are accumulated when difficult tasks are accomplished. The exploit rank will rise with the exploits points.

Higher difficulty exploit will result in more exploit points. The difficulty is set depending on the level. Even if it is the same task, if it is accomplished while being at a lower level, it is considered as a bigger exploit.

\*With exploit points accumulated, a Demi-god can utilize greater power.

[Current exploit rank: Peasant]

This was the reason why Vulcan choose Demi-god.

Of course, Vulcan was impressed by what he saw from the Demi-

god that he met in person. That was part of the reasons. However, if it wasn't for this 'exploits' concept, Vulcan would have agonized between Demi-god and Super Human for a long time.

'There just isn't enough people left in my world for me to take advantage of the Brave Hero's characteristics. The Super Human is definitely not bad. However... The difficulties in Demi-god's exploits rank is based on levels, so Demi-god is the most efficient one!'

Currently, Vulcan's level was 500. However, his true abilities were far greater than that.

He was lacking only in stats. The monsters he could actually fight were far above level 500.

'If I take advantage of this... I can accomplish incredible exploits in a short period of time! If I fight a 700 level monster or fight several 600 level monsters at once, I wonder what kind of exploit points could I get?'

Vulcan stopped thinking about it.

Vulcan was running in high speed using the Thunder God's Might.

In an instant, he moved to a place full of Ancient War Trees. He cast Firefields indiscriminately.

Kuuurrrrr.

Kuwuuuurrrr.

Ten of War Trees became infuriated and attacked Vulcan.

Vulcan used Lightning Dragon Step to the fullest and dodged the vines. He didn't just dodge them. He swung his blade offensively and chopped them down as well.

However, he was fighting substantially higher number of War Trees than before. He couldn't dodge all attacks. Even with the Thunder God's Might and Lightning Dragon Step combined. He was getting injuries here and there.

He was overdoing it.

To achieve Vulcan's ultimate goal, he had to fight for a very long time, like being on a marathon for several tens of years. Fighting recklessly against so many while sustaining injuries was not a useful method.

However, in this instance, it was a matter of achieving something great from doing so.

To that end, Vulcan was willing to put his body through hardship.



In the end, Vulcan incinerated all ten of War Trees. He breathed hard.

There were blood flowing. His armor was damaged all over.

He looked like a soldier in shamble who escaped a violent war zone.

However, there was a notification from the SYSTEM echoing on his ear. It was like a heavenly voice to Vulcan, enough for him to withstand the trouble.

[All at once, you defeated ten opponents that were far stronger than you!]

[You have achieved a great exploit!]

[Your exploit points went up by a large margin.]

[Your exploit rank went up by two levels.]

[Current exploit rank: Veteran]

Along with the notification, great power of Demi-god filled Vulcan's body.

It was different from physical strength, endurance, mana or magic strength.

It was a harmonious, fundamental power that encompassed all of them. Also, there was a will of justice within the power, the kind that would not forgive any evil.

“Phew.”

Adjusting to a strange power that he had never felt before. Vulcan breathed hard.

He smiled brightly.

His body was in a terrible state, but he didn't mind it.

‘If I can achieve an incredible growth like this by going through a hardship like what I just went through, I don't care if I end up in a worse state afterwards.’

Vulcan used potions to replenish his endurance and mana. He waited for them to recover slowly.

Afterwards, in order to compare himself to before obtaining the Demi-god's power, he went to pick a formidable War Tree.

There happened to be a War Tree that was at a distance from other ones.

[An ancient tree that's being shunned by others]

[570Lv]

“I somehow feel sorry for attacking this one.”

Although that's what he said, he was relentless in his magic.

Through his Heavenly Lightning Blade, a Lightning Spear was shut toward the tree. The lightning struck its body.

Kwarurung.

Guuuwrrrrrk Giaaaaak.

It seemed to be in pain. The War Tree rubbed its body with the vines.

Instead of fighting Vulcan, it ran off to the distance. Watching him, Vulcan smiled.

‘As I expected. Although it was for a brief moment, it had a stun effect!’

Some of Vulcan's lightning magic spells did possess stun effect. However, the Lightning Spear didn't have status effects to it. The magic was for damaging only. It didn't have status effect that disrupted the opponent's movements.

However, this time, Vulcan's Lightning Spear did stop the War Tree for a moment.

It was all thanks to the Demi-god's power.

'As I get more exploits, the stun effect for the lightning element magic will have greater effect... This is an insane ability.

The stun duration was very short. Also, it may not amount to much against foes that are far stronger than me.

However, if I accumulate even more exploits? Before the gap between my level and my true power becomes narrow, if I accumulate more exploits, ten or hundred times this, and amplify the Demi-god's power?

When I become the same level as Tolcas... I don't think I'll lose!'

Vulcan checked the status of his body.

His mana became full a long time ago. His endurance was at over 90 percent as well.

As for the damaged armors, he changed to the new ones in the inventory.

He had plenty of items suitable for 500 level.

‘But, if I clear Act 2 after choosing Demi-god as the profession, am I still keeping the promise with Filder?’

Vulcan suddenly thought about that. He thought hard about it for a moment.

He could have chosen to be a Super Human or Demi-god. Regardless, they were human on the basis, so it didn’t matter. That’s what Vulcan thought.

Also, honestly, Vulcan still didn’t think he was a Demi-god.

His shell became a Demi-god, but he thought he was still a human inside.

‘Also, the most important thing is becoming stronger. I made the right choice.’

Vulcan stretched his body and got excited all the way to the tip of his head.

As the last thing, Vulcan confirmed the cooling time for the Superheated Inferno was over. Like a wild predator, Vulcan

charged right into an area surrounded by War Trees.

‘Even if I overexert myself, even if I cough blood, I need to accomplish as many exploits as I can!’

He couldn’t wait around and hope for enlightenment that may never come.

Now was the only time that he could obtain a huge amount of exploit points.

Vulcan stood in middle of twenty War Trees.

With a little excited voice, Vulcan said,

“Superheated Inferno.”

Along with the skill command words spoken, flame of hell poured out and swallowed the War Trees.

---

Three months had gone by.

Vulcan’s level went up by 40, which was astonishing.

It was a result of Vulcan repeatedly taking on many dangerous hunting without hesitation.

It was like running a marathon at a 100 m dash speed. It was intense, and that made Vulcan very exhausted in both his body and mind.

However, despite being exhausted, his hunting speed increased over time.

His exploits rank rose at a fearsome pace.

It was thanks to the power of Demi-god, which came from the exploits.

[Current exploit rank: Hero]

It was three levels higher from the Veteran rank.

Although Vulcan didn't know about it, his rank was now just one level below Tolcas, who had 'Legendary' rank. Hero was a rank that was considered to be on the high side even among Act 2's Demi-gods.

From Vulcan's stand point, he merely found runts who were beneath him and fought them at once to level up. However, from the SYSTEM's stand point, Vulcan had fought several tens of monsters at once when each of them were at level that Vulcan may not survive a one-on-one duel.

Moreover, Vulcan had been repeating the process for three months. He was able to accumulate exploits at a pace that others would accuse him of cheating.

‘As I thought. It was the right choice to go with the Demi-god.’

It might have been okay with choosing the Super Human.

Getting additional stats increase per level up was a great advantage from potential stand point.

However, that would not have enabled Vulcan to achieve rapid growth like this.

Thinking about the wise decision he made, Vulcan smile a little.

“Phew... However, now this won’t work well anymore. Wuuuuurrrrrr.”

Vulcan plummeted to the ground and lied there with his arms and legs fully extended out.

He sighed and thought,

‘This is really the limit.’

Vulcan had been overexerting himself, and he had been doing so



especially because he was having too much fun gaining exploits. Now, the strain from it all was slowly catching up to him.

He had been drinking potion like water, so he appeared to be fine outside. However, his mind could not take it anymore.

This was worse than how things were when Vulcan was training under Filder or was hunting in the Underground Graveyard.

‘Also, it is about time I went to a different hunting ground.’

Now, the level difference between Vulcan and War Trees were only 60.

The place was definitely a useful hunting ground still. However, Vulcan knew a better place, so there was no need for him to stay here.

So, Vulcan decided to say goodbye to the forest area after defeating the boss monster.

“All right.”

Vulcan immediately got up and looked to the distance.

There was a gigantic War Tree. It was so humungous that it was making other trees look like little baby trees. Vulcan wondered if the world tree mentioned in fantasy novels would look like this.

The sight was overwhelming.

[Commander Tree, Big]

[730Lv]

It seemed the tree had been sucking all nutrients from the ground in the area. There wasn't a single tree growing nearby.

Even the War Trees were keeping their distances.

‘That works well for me. I’m actually grateful.’

“It’s time I escaped this island. I’m sick of this place.”

Mumbling by himself, Vulcan slowly stretched his body.

With quick movements, Vulcan evaded small fry War Trees and he arrived at the front of the Commander Tree.

He checked his body status and equipment for the last time before the battle.

And...

Surururuk

While Vulcan was busy getting ready, there were quiet movements around Vulcan. Like a predator in a jungle, there was an existence in hiding that was glaring at Vulcan.

## Chapter 62 - Unexpected

---

It was so stealthy that even Vulcan, who possessed heightened senses, couldn't detect.

It was standing still like a lifeless object, perfectly blending in and becoming a part of the forest.

Its eight eyes were emotionless.

Instead of being a living existence, it was more like a machine with cameras. It certainly was a very strange existence.

Vulcan, completely unaware of this, only focused all of his attention to the Commander Tree, Big.

'All right. I adjusted my equipment to best fit my level. Let's start.'

Vulcan fully raised up his magic and Demi-god powers.

The two powers were surging up relentlessly.

Sensing Vulcan's power exuding from him violently, Big, the Commander Tree that was quietly asleep, showed a response.

Guuuuuuuuoooooooo.

It was obviously exuding animosity toward Vulcan.

Before its animosity could become actions, Vulcan initiated attack first.

Vulcan used Lightning Dragon Steps to quickly approach the tree. He got as close as he could to the tree's main body.

Its roots were size of a small hill.

Standing on top of one, Vulcan activated the Superheated Inferno and quickly escaped.

Boom! Boom!

Giant tree vines struck the place that Vulcan was just standing a moment ago.

Although it was the tree's root that Vulcan was standing, Big didn't mind striking the place.

Vulcan cast Firefields endlessly as he avoided Big's attacks.

Vulcan's plan was overlapping multiple flame magic as he evade the attacks and use the explosion when the Superheated Inferno's duration is almost up. He figured that would result in incredible damage.

However, the Commander Tree was no push over. It was unlike other trees.

Churarararac.

Using its thick vines, it created a wall from the distance to surround Vulcan.

It was like being trapped in a room with a ceiling and having the walls from both sides closing in. It felt suffocating.

Vulcan tried to escape before being completely surrounded. However, thinner vines came out of the thick vines and hindered his movements. That made Vulcan change his mind.

Vulcan wielded the Heavenly Lightning Blade.

Endowed with the magic and Demi-god powers, the lightning blade technique grew to over 300 ft in length. The blade was swung with a fearsome intensity, chopping everything on its path in half.

It possessed an overwhelming offensive power that was never shown before.

It was thanks to the Demi-god's power.

Phazuzuzuzuk.

Having managed to get out of the danger, Vulcan raised his left hand and generated a hundred Lightning Spears.

Each of them contained Demi-god's power.

The magic attacks were launched in incredible speed, faster than a legendary archer from the Buddhist stories. The Lightning Spears struck the Big's body.

'If I keep striking it with lightning magic, its movement will become unnatural. It will make evading... Uh, it's not working.'

Vulcan strained his eyes wide open and observed Big's body.

It seemed that its hardened exterior layer was the problem.

'Looks like it won't get affected by any status elements before I can break through that. It's cutting down the damage... to about half.'

Vulcan didn't get to take advantage of the opportunity he obtained from the Lightning Blade technique. Still, he obtained information, so it was not a waste.

He used the blade and cleared the vines coming at Vulcan. He then cast three of the Ifrit's Fist.

After that, in order to focus the impact area, he concentrated his mind and compressed the Ifrit's Fists.

Kuguguguguk.

The Ifrit's Fists were gradually being compressed.

Initially, they were about 150 ft in diameter each. Now, they were each about the size of a Hellfire.

Unstable movements, use of the Lightning Blade technique, and now, use of excessive magic control... They were starting to take a toll on Vulcan's brain.

Pshuuuuk.

Vulcan was so focused that he was not even aware that he was getting a nosebleed.

Before the Superheated Inferno ended, Vulcan swung his left hand in a powerful motion and launched the Ifrit's Fists.

The Commander Tree also felt the danger. It raised its vines to stop the attack. However, it was not enough.

The Ifrit's Fists broke through the vines as if they were straws. They collided with the Big's body and exploded.



At that moment, at the right timing, Vulcan used Explosion.

BOOOOOM!

Guuuuuurrrrrrrk.

There were continuous explosions above the Superheated Inferno.

Shocked, the Big's gigantic body shook.

It was different from before when Big was protected by the layer. Sensing victory, Vulcan smiled.

‘It cracked open!’

There was a crack about 15 ft in size.

Vulcan was a little disappointed that all that firepower resulted in just cracking the shell. However, it wasn't a big deal at this point.

Now, there was a weak point on Big that was 15 ft in size. Defeating it was going to be a piece of cake from this point.

Vulcan raised his left hand and cast magic.

Of all lightning magic, he cast the Lightning Bolt.

However, he created ten thousand of them. With so many filling the air, an overwhelming pressure, that could not be ignored, was felt.

Vulcan swung his Heavenly Lightning Blade and pointed toward the Big. The countless Lightning Bolts swarmed toward Big like hornets.

Boom, Boom Ba Boom!

Big wrapped the cracked part of its body with vines, creating a thick patch. It looked desperate. It seemed to be aware of the fact that he must not allow attacks on the cracked area.

However, Vulcan was not just going to sit and watch.

With most of the vines used for defense, that made it easier for Vulcan to get closer to Big.

In an instant, Vulcan came right in front of the vines shielding the crack.

He used the Lightning Blade technique once again.

Ziiiiing.

Slice!

The vines could not withstand his Lightning Blade. The crack was exposed fully again.

Through that gap, the Lightning Bolts that Vulcan cast earlier poured in.

Pazuzuzuzuzuk.

Zuzuzuzuzuzuk.

Electricity was flowing into the tree endlessly.

Lightning Bolts, which gained the stun attribute from being mixed with the Demi-god's power, endlessly hindered Big's movement.

It was getting beat up without being able to fight back properly.

While watching this, Vulcan drank potions as if he was an addict.

‘I need to finish this when I have the chance!’

Vulcan walked into the crack and started to cast magic continuously.

He generated more lightning magic to keep the stun effect going. He also cast flame magic to cause continuous damage.

He poured out both kinds like a madman.

He was about to lose consciousness from overexerting himself. Thinking it was kill or be killed situation, he used all of his might to attack the inside of the Commander Tree.

‘Will it die first... or will I run out of strength first?’

Vulcan was absolutely certain of his victory.

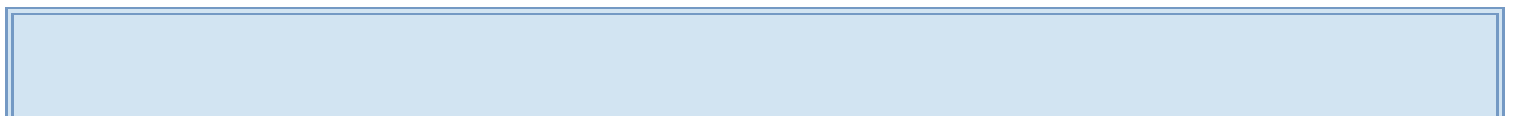
If it was his former self, he would not have been so sure of himself.

However, the Demi-god’s power was augmenting all of his flame magic’s continuous damage.

‘Victory is mine for sure!’

And soon, his confidence in victory became the reality.

There was a notification sound that could be heard loud and clear.



[Your experience points went up.]

[Level Up!]

[You defeated a foe that was almost impossible for you to defeat!]

[You have achieved a great exploit!]

[Your exploit points went up by a huge margin.]

“... I won.”

Inside the tree, he cancelled all magic and plummeted to sit.

Vulcan was so tired that he felt like he could just lie down here forever.

However, the dead body of Big, the Commander Tree, disappeared, and that lead to Vulcan falling from mid-air. He couldn't just lie down there anymore.

‘It's not giving me a chance to rest.’

He somersaulted and landed gracefully on the ground. Vulcan picked up the item.

It was a legendary bow with level limit of 750.

Of all items he obtained so far, this one had the highest rank and level.

‘It’s not bad. I can’t use this weapon, but maybe I can sell it to Elcane. I wonder if he would give me a good price for it.’

Vulcan lied down on the ground again. There wasn’t any monsters around, so he felt like he could relax a little.

More than anything else, he was tired, and he was also in pain.

It was a monster with characteristics that allowed Vulcan to defeat it. However, as expected, a 750 level monster was strong.

There was no margin to spare during the battle.

The Blue Dragon’s Breath, Demi-god’s power, excessive use of potions... With all of them combined, Vulcan barely managed to kill it. He would have ignored it and left the area if it wasn’t for the exploits.

‘Anyway, I finished everything I was going to do here. I guess I’ll return to the Expo City after resting for about an hour.’

Vulcan relaxed and started to rest.

Fresh air from the surrounding trees made him feel comfortable.

Like that, he was half a sleep and enjoyed the leisurely time after a big battle.

Also, there was a monster that was charging at him, aiming for this moment when Vulcan was letting his guard down.

‘What the hell!’

Vulcan felt like his hair was all spiking up, and his heart sunk like the ground was going to collapse.

It was absolutely terrifying like being thrown in to the mouth of a giant beast.

To face that fear, Vulcan raised up his upper body and wielded the blade.

However, Vulcan knew.

His stance was unstable, and his condition was not perfect either.

Swinging a blade like this was not going to stop it.

‘... N...O!’

Vulcan's eyes filled with despair. He could see the monster's level.

[Chimera, B-137]

[762Lv]

It was a decisive moment.

Chimera B-137 went past Vulcan's blade easily with a light movement.

Its gigantic scythe like hand was swung toward Vulcan's legs to slice them off.

Clank!

“Kiiiiiac?”

“...!”

Vulcan thought this was the end for him, but he realized he was still alive. He quickly got up and took a combat stance.



He couldn't believe what just happened. Vulcan stared at B-137.

Its attack was like from the grim reaper's scythe.

Vulcan's legs should have been cut in half. However, Vulcan's body was strangely fine.

It was as if nothing happened.

B-137 was also standing there vacantly as if it was confused about what just happened.

Vulcan, not letting his guard down, thought about it hard.

'It definitely hit me.'

However, that was it.

Like how it was when Vulcan was beating on the Commander Tree's hardened layer, B-137's attack was bounced off powerlessly.

Vulcan scanned its level once again.

[Chimera, B-137]

[762Lv]

‘Not 76Lv, but 762Lv, yet its attack was bounced off? How could this be...’

Vulcan was very curious about it, but perhaps because his life was in mortal danger, he couldn't think straight.

After thinking about it some more, Vulcan tossed the thought aside.

It was because he thought that it was not important at this time.

‘For now, I need to escape this danger, and then... Damn it. I drank too many potions. It won't be effective right now.’

Because of the excitement, his blood was circulating rapidly. With each pulse, each and everyone of the injuries on his body were aching as if they each had a heart of their own.

His mana was almost showing the bottom. He wasn't even sure if he could cast one Ifrit's Fist.

Quite literally, his body was at the worst possible condition.

However, he couldn't just back down like this.

To make sure he was not missing its movements, Vulcan strained his eyes and focused his mind.

Toward Vulcan, the chimera, which had four arms and eight eyes, charged in violently.

---

It was at an underground research laboratory.

There was a clean room, unlike the other room next to it which was filled with experimental subjects, chemicals and equipment. In that clean room, a bizarre-looking old man sitting was sitting there.

About a quarter of his head was replaced with a metallic plate. Where his eyes should be were filled with red lenses.

The man, using his tree branch like thin fingers, picked up a cookie and brought it toward his mouth.

Crunch Crunch.

Even his teeth were not normal.

They were sharper than those of normal human beings.

He looked fearsome like predator beasts or monsters. Young children would have ran away in tears if they saw his appearance.

The man was very unique looking.

In front of him, there were over a hundred square screens in arrays.

To compare it to Earth, it was like the man was observing CCTVs in a main security room.

However, the visuals were not of the insides of the building.

Some were showing flames engulfing the ground. Some had rough rocky landscapes.

There were also beach, deep forest area, underground caves, and etc...

The screens were showing all sorts of places.

In one of those screens, an unusual movement was being displayed.

“Oh, a prey fell in, it fell in!”

The old man smiled with satisfaction. He focused his mana on the screen that showed a gigantic tree.

He closed all other screens at an instant, and the screen became

enlarged.

He could see a man beating the crap out of the tree using all sorts of flashy magic.

“Kukkuk. He isn’t powerful enough to overwhelm the Commander Tree... but he isn’t weak enough to lose either. He’s perfect. If I attack him when he is exhausted, I think I might be able to pick up some useful materials.”

The battle between the gigantic tree and the man was going as the old man predicted.

The man had a difficult fight, but using an intriguing magic combination, the man pierced through the Commander Tree’s defense and finished the fight. The old man smiled as he watched the man.

The Commander Tree roared in pain and withered.

After a moment, the Commander Tree’s dead body disappeared like it was never there, and there was a man landing on the ground.

‘What the? What did he do to that gigantic tree?’

It was a scene that made the old man doubt his eyes. He tilted his head side to side, but it didn’t matter.

He just had to catch him and torture him. The answers would be made known to him naturally that way.

With a shady smile, the old man ordered B-137 to attack.

Considering that the man was lying on the ground, exhausted, the old man figured B-137's victory was for certain.

‘Instead of killing him, I think I should just cut off his legs so he can't run.’

Having received the order, the chimera charged toward the man like an arrow.

As the old man expected, the man was mostly exhausted.

It seemed that it would be impossible for the man to fight off the chimera, which was about as strong as the Commander Tree.

The chimera avoided the powerlessly swung blade with ease. Up to the point when it swung its grim reaper like claws at the man's leg, the old man believed that his plan was a success.

However,

Clank!

The man in the screen didn't receive any damage.

“ ... ”

Took.

The old man dropped the cookie he was enjoying.

A heavy silence filled the underground laboratory.

## Chapter 63 - Unexpected (Part 2)

---

The old man, who was vacantly staring at the screen for a moment, opened his mouth.

“What the? How?”

He was sure that this man was a fish in a barrel.

As if he didn't anticipate the Chimera's attack at all, the man exposed his legs so easily.

However, the end result was something completely unexpected.

The man got up without a scratch and faced the Chimera. It was ridiculous.

“How could this be... He must have used all of his strength in his last battle. So how? Did he have a protective spell cast?”

It didn't appear to be the case.

The man in the screen looked too surprised for that to be the case.

The old man cringed.



‘For now, let’s attack him again.’

The old man gave the order to the Chimera again through telepathy. The Chimera violently charged at the young man again.

Again, the situation was flowing as the old man expected.

The man was desperately using his blade and magic to parry the Chimera’s attacks. However, gradually, as if he was getting exhausted, the man’s defense became slower.

The situation was flowing smoothly toward the Chimera’s victory.

In an instant, the Chimera’s four arms were striking down toward the man, and he was not able to block one of the arms. Watching this, the old man cheered.

“That’s right! It’s over...!”

Clank!

“...”

Again, the Chimera’s arm was bounced off.

The old man got up from the seat like a spring. He roared in

frustration.

“Kuuuuaaaak! Just what’s the problem! Fuck! It’s not like he is a newbie! Did this guy get protective spells from twenty different Demi-gods?”

It was a ridiculous idea to even think about. However, the situation at hand was unthinkable. It was beyond common sense.

It was making the old man’s inside boil.

He was breathing in anger. It looked as if steam could come out of his nose and ears.

From doing all sorts of strange experiments, the old man’s personality was in shambles. His personality was far more violent and rough than that of ordinary people.

The old man thought it was a done deal, but the runt survived unscathed for no apparent reason. Watching it was making the old man’s blood flow the wrong way. He was about to throw things out of anger, but he realized it was an expensive magic equipment, so he didn’t. Instead, he tossed himself to the sofa near the wall.

“Ugh, ugh.”

‘There has to be a reason. That man must have done something, or there is something wrong with the Chimera that I made.’

Forcing himself to suppress the anger that was rising up, the old man adjusted the picture on the screen. The location was very far away, so doing so cost him quite a bit of mana. However, even if it was to observe the scene a little more in detail, this was necessary.

Soon, the old man was able to determine the reason why the young man was completely fine.

There was a rainbow colored dot on his forehead.

It was a protective blessing from the Runitus, one of the managers of Act 2.

The old man fell to silence again.

“ ... ”

‘This is... Fuck. It really was a protective blessing for a newbie?’

Everything was a wasted effort for the old man. He was actually getting embarrassed for being so angry.

The old man raised his right hand and covered his forehead.

However, there was one thing that he couldn’t understand.

‘If that guy is a newbie, and it has not even been 10 years since he arrived at Act 2, then what about that Commander Tree? How come it died in fire? Let alone a Commander Tree, even a regular War Tree would have won against a newbie.’

Big, the Commander Tree, was the forest area’s boss monster. It was a pretty tough one. The old man was not absolutely sure if his Chimera, which he carefully built, could win against Big.

‘A newbie mage swordsman that just came to Act 2 killed Big in one-on-one battle?’

This was ludicrous.

All of the old man’s thoughts were coming to a dead-end instead of a plausible explanation. Frustrated, the old man ground his teeth.

‘However, it is not completely impossible.’

A Demi-god with thick blood of the god flowing within could show that much power from the start. Also, if that man was a Demi-god with great potential, it meant that the old man would be better off if he just disposed the Chimera to prevent the man from finding his way to him.

‘All Demi-gods are well connected by powerful beings... Oh no. While I was thinking about this, they were still fighting!’

The old man realized the young man was now completely neglecting defense and pouring attacks at the Chimera. The old man quickly retreated the Chimera.

Having Chimera attack a newbie was considered attacking a resident, so it was defended against by the protective blessing. However, the Chimera was not protected by the blessing, so it was getting beat up on a one-sided fight.

The old man had no choice but to make the Chimera retreat.

‘Fuck. This is infuriating.’

The Chimera was on the run for a while.

Fortunately, there was no sign of pursuit.

Sighing in relief, the old man hid the Chimera in a shadowy place. The old man thought about what just happened.

‘Is he a Demi-god? Is he a human with ridiculous talent?’

The answer was not coming to him easily.

The common sense said the man must be a Demi-god. However, the man’s getup was completely different from Demi-gods.

He had all sorts of equipment attached all over.

He was completely different from Demi-gods who went around almost naked.

‘Was there anything unique about the man? Perhaps I could figure this out from that. Looking at the combat stance is too ordinary... Um?’

The old man suddenly clapped.

The look on his face seemed like he just realized something.

He said it in a loud voice, enough to make the entire basement echo with the sound.

“Player!”

He was certain. None of this made sense if the young man was not a Player.

The Big’s corpse disappeared all of sudden after the battle. Also, the man picked up something that was produced afterwards.

These were the characteristics unique to the Players in Act 1 that he saw a long time ago.

Disappointed, the old man said,

“Ah... This is too bad. A Player would make the best material...”

He had long forgotten questions such as how he could have gotten so strong when he was just a newbie.

To the old man, the more important factor that was coming to his mind was the fact that the prey that he just lost was a ‘Player’ an extremely rare and the best material.

‘It certainly is. It is rarer than Demi-gods, and it is more special than them...’

Players had bodies that grew stronger just from hunting monsters.

They didn’t need to gather materials and build equipment. They obtained equipment and items from hunting as well. The Players had mysterious abilities.

The old man thought there couldn’t be any other research subject that would be more interesting than Players.

Also, unlike dealing with Demi-gods, he didn’t have to worry about the aftermath.

If he was a newbie and a Player, it was highly unlikely that he

was well connected or had factions.

The old man's brain was spinning fast.

‘I need to catch him no matter what it takes. He is the best material that's extremely hard to come by... There is no worry for the aftermath too... He seems pretty strong, but having just ten Chimeras would be enough to catch him alive. The problem is the protective blessing. I don't know how long it will last.’

The old man had been staying in the laboratory all this time and focused on research like there was no tomorrow. This was something that he had no way of knowing.

The old man cringed.

‘Looks like I'll have to ask the oracle. It will cost me some money, but... it cannot be helped.’

Money was not important right now.

If he obtained successful result from studying a Player who was strong enough to come to Act 2, he could expect reaching a new height that was never possible from having a human's body.

‘Before bastards from other research organization snatches him up... I'm going to catch him. Kuhuhu... After that failure at Act 1, I thought I'll never get to have another chance, but I'm getting a blessing from the heavens.’



The old man thought about having the Player's body neatly lying on the laboratory.

Just thinking about it was making the old man excited.

---

“Ugh, ugh.”

Vulcan was breathing hard.

He wanted to chase after the unidentified beast that was running away to the distance. However, he didn't have the strength left.

He was just thankful that he was able to survive the danger that snuck up on him.

When Chimera completely disappeared from Vulcan's sight, he plummeted on the ground.

‘I didn't even have a chance to do the Enlightened Being Summon...’

Vulcan didn't know why it ran off, but regardless, he survived.

Vulcan constantly grabbed a hold of himself from relaxing. In high alert, he looked around the surrounding.

Afterwards, he injected mana into Kina Kina so he could summon

at any time.

In order to use the return scroll, he had to be in the non-combat condition.

Because he was just in a battle, Vulcan needed time.

In the meantime, another monster could attack him.

‘Even one War Tree could be dangerous.’

Vulcan spent the time anxiously like that.

Finally, the combat condition was dismissed. Vulcan tore the return scroll that he had on his hand beforehand and moved to the last location.

Uuuuuung.

Along with the light, Vulcan was teleported to Espo City, but he panicked a little.

Vulcan thought he would be returned to the airship port. However, what he saw was countless people in the main plaza.

‘Does the description ‘last location’ mean just the city? This means that I’ll be returning to the city no matter where I was.’

Vulcan was thinking this was actually better.

Espo City was directly protected by Act 2 Managers.

There was no danger for Vulcan even if he decided to just lie down and sleep right this instant.

Vulcan looked around.

Vulcan was covered in injuries, so it would not have been strange for people to stare at him. However, nobody in the main plaza was looking at him.

It was because it was a very common sight to see here.

Vulcan also liked this lack of interest.

‘In Beloong city, this always garnered attention. Looks like there is one thing good about being a newbie again.’

Vulcan found a suitable bench, lied down on it, and closed his eyes.

He had a lot to think about, but recovery came first.

Vulcan pushed aside all of this questions and slowly fell asleep.

---

---

“Information?”

“Yes, information.”

“Why are you asking about that here?”

“It’s because I don’t know anyone in particular.”

Vulcan answered with an uninterested face.

Kiba, looking at Vulcan’s face, shook his head.

“It have never seen a human like you. You insisted on riding on the airship to go to the west islands. Now, you are asking for information. Why not just go to a pub?”

“Haha. I think there is a limit to the information I could get from pubs, so...”

Vulcan was a sleep without a care.

The first thing he did after recovery was going to the pub.

It was to gather information about the unidentified beast that attacked him.

However, Vulcan didn't learn anything from going to the pub.

Most of the stories there were about famous Demi-god, Dragonian or gods.

‘Even those were hard to hear properly.’

It could not be helped because Vulcan didn't know anyone.

In the end, Vulcan gave up on getting information from the pub. While wondering around aimlessly, he ran into a familiar building. That got Vulcan to think about Kiba, someone he knew a little. This was the reason why he was asking Kiba for information.

Not sure about what to do, Kiba looked at Vulcan.

Vulcan faced Kiba with an awkward look as he thought about the Chimera that attacked him.

‘Is it really a monster? I never heard about a monster like that. Even The Six didn't tell me about such... Also, I heard that there isn't any other monsters besides War Trees and the Commander Tree in the forest area...’

There was one other thing that Vulcan was even more curious about.

‘How come it couldn't harm me?’

This was the thing that Vulcan was most curious about.

‘Could it be... Someone’s summoned beast was targeting me?’

If that was the case, it made sense why he was all right.

Residents of the Act 2 could not harm a newbie.

However, Vulcan could not make sense of it no matter how hard he tried.

So far, after coming to the Act 2, Vulcan only did the following. He rode on the airship, met the Blue Dragon and went to the forest area to go on a hunting spree.

He had no reason to be attacked by anyone.

Having thought this far, he decided to quit making conjectures.

In the end, what he needed was information.

Vulcan thought that he will be able to prepare for the danger if he had the information.

Vulcan asked Kiba again.

“Actually, I was going to go ask someone named Karil the fortune teller to get some information, but I couldn’t find him for some reason.”

He was the information merchant from 700 years ago that Haywood told Vulcan about.

However, perhaps something had happened to the man. Vulcan searched the entire city, but he could not find Karil.

Having heard what Vulcan said, Kiba said right away,

“Of course. That man died over a hundred years ago.”

“Why did he die?”

“He said he was sick of living. I’ve heard he lived for over 10,000 years.”

Vulcan was not sure why, but he could accept that as the reason. He asked back,

“In that case, is there anyone else in Espo City that deals information?”

“There is one... called ‘Oracle.’ It’s a new guild established about 300 years ago, but that place is a little...”

Kiba was blurring the end of the sentence. Kiba looked at Vulcan's appearance.

“You don't have any money, do you? To get information from them, you will need a lot of money.”

Kiba was patronizing Vulcan as a newbie.

Vulcan said after thinking carefully.

“I don't have money, but I do have equipment that will be worth a lot of money...”



# Chapter 64 - Auction

---

Vulcan thought about the items in the inventory.

Most of them were ordinary to quality rate, but there were a few grand rate items.

‘I also have the legendary rate bow...’

The situations with the items in Act 2 were better than Act 1. The blacksmith shop in Espo City was managed by the god of blacksmith himself.

Compared to how Haywood ran the blacksmith shop using haphazardly acquired skills, it was a difference between the ground and the sky.

However, there was still more demand than supplies. This fact remained the same.

‘They said useful equipment are still in short supplies. Moreover, the blacksmith is lazy, so he doesn’t open the shop very often either...’

In conclusion, Vulcan was confident that the grand rate or above equipment that he had were going to get him enough money.

However, Kiba thought differently.

Still not convinced, Kiba was looking at Vulcan. He said,

“Perhaps you used to be a blacksmith, but you mustn’t compare Act 2 to Act 1. There are many people here who are craftier than you.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes. Also, besides the craftsmanship... The difference in materials is huge. Compared to the materials you gathered...”

Kiba blurred the end of the sentence.

However, Vulcan knew what he was going to say.

‘That’s true. As a newbie, how good of materials could I possibly get?’

Vulcan could understand Kiba’s concern.

“Still, we wouldn’t know until I tried selling them.”

“Hm... If you say so.”

Kiba took a sip of water and said,

“Oracle, the information organization, is near the market. On its door, there are crystals shining in all sorts of colors, so it will be easy to find it. Enter there, pay the price and get the information you want.”

“Thank you.”

“Well, as for selling items, get settled in any empty spot and sell it. Just make sure to check out what others are selling and at what price before selling yours. You should at least know the current prices.”

“Ah, that makes sense.”

Vulcan answered like a fool.

It was something Vulcan didn't even think about because he never had sold anything until now.

‘In Act 1, thanks to Mr. Jake, I never needed money except when I went to the pub... I wish I got someone like Mr. Jake here.’

Vulcan suddenly missed Jake.

“I don't know what kind of information you are looking for, but information is quite expensive, so don't be disappointed if you don't get enough money.”

Kiba added one more thing.

Vulcan felt that Kiba was quite a caring person.

‘I heard that there are lot of violent ones among the beastman, but it looks like not all of them are.’

“Yes, thank you. It was very helpful to talk to you.”

Vulcan thanked him sincerely and left the building. He quickly walked toward the market.

On the first day in Act 2, Vulcan checked out the city while waiting for the airship to arrive, so he was already aware of where the market was.

Before long, Vulcan arrived at the market.

It looked similar to Act 1, but it was a lot bigger.

There were more merchants and customers, so it looked almost like a big city in Rubel continent.

Vulcan entered the market to check out the goods.

There were many signs and items in arrays.

Vulcan approached a vendor who was wearing a red colored martial warrior's getup. He checked out the item there.

[Quality rate weapon – Fire Dragon Blade]

[Level limit: 630Lv]

Attack power + 578

Endurance 174/200

Attack speed +10%

Attack power increases by 5% when using singularity type martial technique.

\*A martial warrior who is also skilled at blacksmithing created this blade by pouring in his internal energy to it.

“How much is this?”

The warrior lifted his head and looked at Vulcan. He cringed a little and responded as if he was complaining.

“3200 Aus.”

Having heard the response, Vulcan nodded and walked away. The warrior said,

“You are just a newbie. Why is he here? He probably don’t have any money anyway.”

‘Ah, they are assuming this.’

Since then, Vulcan didn’t ask about the prices.

Instead, he checked out the goods that already had the prices written. It was enough for him to understand the current prices for things. After looking around the market for about an hour, he felt confident enough to start selling.

Vulcan found an empty vendor spot and brought out the items.

He brought out one legendary rate item, four grand rate items, and ten quality rate items. 15 items filled the table. Behind the table, Vulcan, with a smile on his face, started selling.

‘Unlike what I thought, items’ levels are not too high.’

Of course, things were still higher than how they were in Act 1. However, things were better than what he expected.

Most of the items he saw in the markets were quality rate, and

grand rate items were rare. Moreover, he could not find any legendary rate items.

‘Although the level limits are high... It is still strange. I heard that there are people from Dwarf world once in a while too, yet...’

Still, this was a good thing for Vulcan.

This meant that the items that Vulcan was selling were competitive.

However, nobody was coming to Vulcan’s spot.

Even those who were approaching his spot turned away after seeing Vulcan.

‘What’s this? Do the items I’m selling look bad?’

However, Vulcan didn’t think their appearances looked shabby.

Vulcan had no way of knowing what the problem was, so he decided to wait a little longer. Like that, one hour passed.

He finally figured it out.

It was the dot in his forehead that was exuding light.

‘Ugh. I thought the protective blessing was a really good thing, but it’s seriously getting in the way now.’

It was obvious now. People were not interested in items being sold by some newbie.

Without the ability to scan the items, even Vulcan would not have been interested in bothering to check the items.

The look on Vulcan’s face crumpled like a piece of paper.

Sigh came out on its own.

‘Ugh... These are actually really great items. There isn’t any way I could show them.’

He couldn’t just shout out and say it is a grand rate spear with level limit of 700.

With his head lowered big time, Vulcan thought hard about how to get past this problem.

‘What if I put a bandanna on my forehead? Maybe it won’t work?’

“Hm... Hm...”



Perhaps Vulcan's desperation worked in the end.

After one and a half hour later, the first customer came.

The man was wearing a dark martial warrior's getup, much like how Lee Jung-yup was in Act 1. Toward the middle-aged man, without realizing it, Vulcan said in a very polite manner,

"Welcome! I sell various weapons and armors. What kind of items are you looking for?"

Vulcan was being extremely polite, Vulcan probably was never this polite to anyone since he came to Act 2.

The customer nodded as he checked out the items.

"I'm interested in this blade... Did you make it?"

"No. I'm just the seller. It was made by a skilled blacksmith."

To give the customer confidence in the item, Vulcan lied to him.

Vulcan felt like the man would just leave if Vulcan told him that the items were obtained by himself.

Fortunately, it seemed like the customer was believing Vulcan.

“Um. It appears to be the case. The quality is definitely good. It’s too good to say that a newbie made it. How much is it?”

‘Although I didn’t make it, that’s unpleasant to hear somehow.’

Keeping his facial expression in check, Vulcan said,

“It is 3300 Aus.”

The blade had a little better specs than the Fire Dragon Blade he saw earlier. Vulcan figured that was a reasonable price, and the warrior must have thought the same. The man paid the price for the blade.

“I hope you sell a lot more.”

“Yes, thank you.”

‘It sold!’

Vulcan bowed toward the martial warrior who was leaving with the blade he just purchased.

Vulcan, for the first time, managed to sell an item.

It took a while to start, but in the end, he successfully sold one and made money.

Vulcan was proud of it.

It was a lot more fun than slaughtering a bunch of giant monsters.

‘Now that I think about it, I have never experienced this kind of life.’

Since 20 years-old, right around when Vulcan was going to enter the society as an adult, Vulcan fell to the Rubel continent. Since then, he lived the life of battle.

The trivial things that ordinary people would have experienced and enjoyed became strange and fun experiences for Vulcan.

Fighting monsters that would make ordinary people piss their pants became Vulcan’s daily life. Ordinary things like selling items at a vendor became a once in a while thing.

Vulcan realized his life had changed so much. Having realized it, he felt that he was calming down a little.

‘Now that I think about it, I’m doing this to get information about the monster that was targeting my life.’

Vulcan was down a little. He hardened the look on his face.

Only a moment ago, he was excited from making his first sale. However, now, his body felt heavy.

However, the customers didn't care about the condition of Vulcan's mood.

As if the lack of customers for the first hour and a half was a lie, customers started to swarm the place.

It was as if someone spread rumors about him.

'Is it because of that martial warrior?'

It seemed that he liked the blade a lot.

Although he was not in a good mood, Vulcan was busy serving the customers and selling the items.

His items were definitely competitive in the market. Once there were many customers to view the items, many of the quality rate items were sold.

One customer even purchased several blades.

In just two hours, Vulcan refilled the items on the display twice.

He was able to make a pretty good profit.

However, the grand rate items and the legendary item were still there.

It was because the customers were thinking that the price difference was too much.

“Why is that spear so expensive?”

“This is... the blacksmith said it was made with a lot more effort and care, so it should be sold at that price at least, so...”

“Hm... It definitely seems to be a better item, but I don’t think it is worth that much... I’ll buy this one instead.”

“Yes. Thank you.”

‘Ugh. That one is quality rate item, and that one is a grand rate item! I explained the stats in detail, yet they don’t believe me... It cannot be helped. It’s not like there is a certificate of authenticity. It will not be easy for them to know about the special attributes unless they tried it out on fighting a real monster, so...’

In Act 1, there were many Players who could confirm the stats for people, so this was not an issue. However, in Act 2, Vulcan was the only Player.

There wasn’t anyone who could objectively judge the items’

stats.

‘Ugh. Since I sold the other items, maybe this is enough? I think I made enough money... Maybe not? Kiba said information is expensive here. Also, I still have items that are useless for me. I think it would be better to sell more while I have the chance.’

While lightly scratching the head with his finger, Vulcan thought hard about this.

‘Should I sell more? Should I stop here and go to the Oracle?’

At that moment, someone, who was also selling things on the vendor spot next to Vulcan, asked,

“Excuse me.”

“Yes?”

Vulcan turned to look. There was an adorable looking baby tiger looking at Vulcan.

There was a glowing dot on the forehead. It seemed he was also a newbie.

‘Looks like he transformed into this form. He looks adorable.’

Vulcan scanned the baby tiger's abilities.

[God-beast Gao, the Great King Tiger]

[511Lv]

“It seems you are doing errands for your master too.”

“Yes, it's like that.”

Vulcan responded properly. With innocent looks on his eyes, Gao said,

“I have been watching from a while ago. It seems those five items must be quite exquisite. Items like that don't sell very well in a street vendor spot like here.”

“Ah, is that so? I didn't hear about any other place where I could sell things, so...”

“Hur hur... Your master must be quite heartless. He didn't even tell you about something so simple.”

“Haha. Yes, he is.”

‘It’s not that they are heartless. The information is 700 years old, so it is lacking in many ways.’

Vulcan waited for Gao to continue. Licking his tongue around, Gao started to explain.

“On the back side of the vendor market, if you go to that large building over there, you can enter exquisite items for auction. Of course, you can purchase items too. If you pay a fee, they even examine the item for you. If you want the items to get proper certifications, I think it would be good for you to go there.”

“Oh, so there was a place like that... About the examiner, is he someone that can be trusted?”

“Of course. He just came to Act 2 as a Manager. He obtained godhood.”

Gao brushed his neck and continued.

“Anyway, if you are interested, I recommend that you check out the place. Well then, I’m finished with my work here, so I’ll be going now.”

With his tail shaking gently, Gao walked away to the distance.

With a blank look on his face, Vulcan watched Gao like that for a while. Vulcan then turned his head toward the auction building.



“Well, I might be able to get a better price then here, won’t I?”

Vulcan cleaned up the street vendor kiosk and started to walk toward the auction building.

## Chapter 65 - Auction (2)

---

Except the time for sleeping and eating, Parukuru had been living in middle of battle. It had been ages since he returned to Espo City. His return was because his beloved giant axe was seriously damaged.

Parukuru the berserk warrior thought about the intense battle from two days ago.

Fighting Hydra was the greatest challenge yet in his life.

For three straight days of bloody battle through the day and night, in the end, with an Enlightenment, Parukuru managed to slice off all nine of its head. However, the acid blast from the monster made his axe lose its proper functionality.

With a little bit of hope, he went to see a dwarf who is a comrade of his. However, even the dwarf said it was impossible to repair the axe.

‘In the end, going to the Espo City is the only way.’

The blacksmith shop in Espo City was managed by Parkers, the god of blacksmith himself.

Thinking that Parkers, with his godly skill that surpassed humans, could restore his beloved weapon back to its former glory, Parukuru returned to the city.

However...

“What? The shop is closed?”

“That’s right. Parkers, the god of blacksmiths and also a brother of Mumnus the great, hasn’t been running the shop since five years ago.”

“Huh... How could this be... Can you tell me why?”

“He didn’t tell us exactly why... I think there is a trouble in the world that he is looking after. He is currently at a lower dimension.”

Surprised, Parukuru asked back,

“What, he is in the lower dimension?”

“Yes... It seems like you haven’t been in the Espo City for quite some time?”

“For about 20 years... So, did he say anything about when he will be back?”

Having heard what Parukuru said, the apprentice said with an apologetic face,

“He said he will be gone for at least 10 years.”

“This can’t be...”

Parukuru looked at the apprentice with a desperate look.

Wondering if the shop’s apprentices could repair the axe, he showed them the axe, but they all shook their heads.

Parukuru left the shop empty handed.

He sighed deep.

“Huuuu.”

He opened his dimensional expansion bag and brought out his spare axes.

He didn’t like any of them.

If he fought a giant beast like Hydra with any of these, it felt like he would be fighting with bare fists before he got to slice off the fourth head.

‘The old saying about masters not being picky about the tools? What a load of bullcrap.’

It wasn't like using a superior weapon was going to increase one's ability by a huge margin.

However, there were so many who passed away after using wishy washy fitting weapons and not being able to show their true strength.

So, to a berserker like Parukuru, a good weapon was like one's life itself.

He took heavy steps and dragged himself to the auction building.

He didn't bother with where the street vendors were.

He knew that weapons there would be only on par with his spare axes.

'Ugh, even so, I don't think the auction will have the item I need either.'

Exquisite weapons were short in supply, and more exquisite weapons were even rarer. It was obvious.

Parukuru won't be agonizing over this in the first place if there were plenty of weapons that were up to his standard.

Parukuru entered the auction building's door as he prayed to the

God Powell.

‘Please, let there be a quality axe!’

Perhaps it was in response to his prayer.

As soon as he turned his head, he saw an axe flowing with red-color polish.

Like a mesmerized man, Parukuru walked to the front of it.

‘This is... good. It’s not bad.’

Parukuru felt it as soon as he saw the axe.

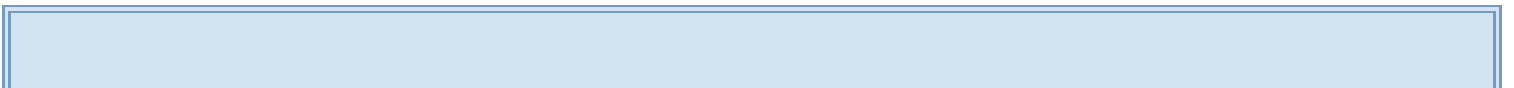
Its sharp edge, its heavy weight.

It had violent aura that said it would split everything in half.

It was an axe that was made for a berserker like himself.

Parukuru’s gaze quickly moved down.

It was to look at the weapon’s spec in detail.



[Examined item: Crimson Executioner]

Beyond the level of a renowned blacksmith, this item is speculated to be created by the hands of a master.

Upon examination, it was found that the axe lightens the body of the wielder, enabling quicker continuous attacks. Also, the axe's power increases as it gets stained with blood.

Comprehensive rating: B

\* Caution – It causes the user to be in berserker mode. If you believe you are not at the height to handle this yet, we recommend that you do not use this weapon (It is highly likely that you will not be able to bring out the full potential of the weapon.).

‘B rating... It’s even better than the axe I had been using!’

The axe he had been using had C+ rating. Although it seemed low, that was because the examiner was a god, not a human being. It was a pretty good weapon for human’s standards.

However, this weapon in front of him broke through that lofty standard and got a B rating.

‘Also, its attributes are made for me!’

Parukuru quickly looked at the auction end date and the bid price.

It was as expected. Because it was a rare axe with superior quality, the bid was quite high.

‘But I must have this axe.’

Parukuru, with pride, entered his bid.

He entered a value that was over twice the highest bid.

Money was of no use to him, so he had been just letting it pile up until now. He invested all of that money here.

However, he didn’t think it was a waste at all.

Just thinking about wielding that axe and slicing monsters with it made his blood flow rapidly.

Parukuru, who was in middle of letting his wings of imagination go wild, heard people mumbling nearby.

He turned to look, and there were a lot of people in the auction building.



‘What is this? Is there more items that are useful here?’

With his curiosity spiked, he got past the people to look.

After checking a few more items, he could see why there were so many people here.

‘There was another B rating item. Surprising...’

Things like this happened once in a while.

Famous blacksmiths occasionally created many weapons after having a sudden inspiration and place them on the auction.

Such occasions were rare, so many people came to the auction after hearing rumors when many superb items got listed for auction.

Like others, Parukuru watched the other items.

It was always a joy to look at weapons created by hands of masters who poured in great materials and god-like focus. He was happy to walk around the building and examine them all.

The very last item he saw was the bow.

There were significantly more people there to watch it, so

Parukuru raised his expectations.

His eyes quickly moved to the examination result note.

‘There are so many people here. Just how amazing is this bow...’

Having confirmed the rating, Purukuru froze in silence.

The A rating.

The A rating was absolutely impossible for humans to achieve. Only the greatest talents among the dwarfs rarely produced an A rating weapons.

Even Parkers, the god of blacksmiths, acknowledged the quality of items that received A ratings. It means that there was no doubt that this weapon’s quality was top notch.

“It’s been ages since I saw an A rating bow.”

“I know. Gosh. If I had the money, I would buy it...”

“You got no money. Just settle for watching it.”

“By the way, these items... They were all brought in by the same person?”

“That’s what I’ve heard. I think he is here for an errand from his master...”

“With God Parkers gone for the time being, we were short on equipment, but maybe we will have a breather from now on...”

Ignoring what other people were saying, Parukuru was unable to get his eyes off from the bow. High-elves near him were also lost in looking at the bow.

Just to earn some money to pay for the information, Vulcan listed his four grand rate items and one legendary rate item.

The impact from these items were more than Vulcan anticipated.

---

With the items sold, Vulcan received the payment and left the building.

With a surprised look, Vulcan counted the money.

643,000 Aus.

It was huge, far beyond what Vulcan expected.

‘I don’t think I’ll have to worry about the fee for the information... But, are grand rate and legendary rate items this rare?’

Although Vulcan found it strange, it was actually obvious here.

So far, Vulcan was sponsored by Jake with equipment that Jake had been collecting for several hundred years and kept without using all that time. In addition to that, with the SYSTEM and quest rewards, Vulcan had been using only the best equipment.

All this time, Vulcan never knew what it felt to lack equipment. To him, items with grand rate or legendary rate were something that he could obtain with luck. However, to other people, that was not the case.

To other people, literally, a grand rate was something rare as the rating indicated, and a legendary rate was even rarer, at a legendary level.

It was hard for other people to come by at such items.

This experience made Vulcan realize again the SYSTEM possessed incredible perks.

‘On top of this, I’m the only Player here. So... If I wanted to, I could become rich here easily.’

Of course, Vulcan had no desire to do so.

It was convenient to be rich. However, his goal was beating Act 2 as quickly and safely as possible.

He was not interested in wasting time in item farming and selling.

However, there were a few that couldn't leave Vulcan alone.

“Excuse me... Pardon me, but are you the one that sold this axe at the auction?”

The man was over 10 ft.

He was a muscular man that looked like he could kick an elephant as if the elephant was just a soccer ball.

[Parukuru, Berserker with the blood of giant mixed within]

[721Lv]

“That's right. What is it?”

“Excuse me... About all items you listed this time... I've heard that it was your master that crafted all of them.”

“Ah, that.”

Vulcan had been lying about it all this time, so he couldn't stop it now.

Having heard what Vulcan said, Parukuru said with respectful voice,

“If it is not too much trouble, will it be all right if I asked about your master's name and place of his residence? He's craftsmanship is incredible... I would like to go introduce myself. Also, there will be a time when the axe would need repairs, so... Please.”

“Um... I'm sorry. My master doesn't like dealing with others... Please understand.”

To start with, there was no master or blacksmith. Vulcan roughly responded again.

Vulcan was worried the man might insist on asking about where the blacksmith was. However, Parukuru left without doing so.

“Is that so... I understand. Please tell your master that I'll think of this axe as if it was a part of me.”

“Yes, I will.”

‘There is no master.’

Vulcan was able to make Parukuru leave.

However, he was not the end of this.

Now, several people swarmed at Vulcan and asked about his master.

“Excuse me, will you be coming to the auction again?”

“Is your master a dwarf? Or a High-elf?”

“Please, tell me when you will be coming to the auction again. Next time, I’ll definitely come after collecting enough money!”

“Uh... We don’t have anything scheduled exactly, so... That’ll be all.”

Vulcan quickly left the scene.

It looked like he was going to have to tell them about the name of his imaginary master, his area of expertise, place of residence and even make promises for more trade if he stayed here longer.

‘Phew... I think I’ll wear a mask when I come to the auction next time.’

On a narrow street with nobody around, Vulcan thought about what happened, and there was one more man trying to talk to him.

‘I didn’t think someone would follow me all the way here.’

With uninterested look, Vulcan said,

“I’m sorry, but I can’t tell you anything about my master.”

“Ah, I’m sorry. It looks like you were pestered a lot.”

“Well then...”

“Wait, before you go, please take this.”

Vulcan accepted what the man handed to him.

It was a palm-sized flyer. It had information and location about a general store in Espo City.

“What is this?”

“It is a general store managed by my master. He is very interested in superior weapons, so... If you are interested in selling another A rate weapon later, can you please stop by here first? We will give you proper price for it.”

‘Ah, now that I’m looking at him, I see he is the man that bought the legendary rate bow.’



Although he was at a low level, he purchased a bow with 750 level limit. Vulcan thought it was strange, but it seemed that it was actually by the request from his master.

‘Well, one day, I’ll run out of Filder’s potions, so maybe I should accept it for now?’

Finished with his thought, Vulcan said to the man,

“I will think about it. What’s the name of the shop?”

“Thank you. If you look at the paper, it is shown there. Here, on this side.”

Vulcan looked at the paper again.

He didn’t look all that carefully last time, so he didn’t see it then. This time, he could see the name.

“Forwaru... Forwaru General Store... It sounds familiar somehow...’

“Ah!”

Vulcan shouted out loud.

It seemed the shop's manager was someone that Vulcan knew.

‘Mr. Jake's master's name is... Forwaru, isn't that right?’

# Chapter 66 - Badblood

---

Vulcan asked the man that just handed him the paper,

“Is he running a merchant business in Espo City?”

“That’s right? If you are interested, would you like to come and check out the place? Endurance and mana potions, antidote potion, holy water and even mysterious rocks that helps your luck... We have many useful items.”

The man was actively advertising the store. Looking at the man, Vulcan’s face turned to a strange look.

The man looked rather humbled considering that he must have been an ultra-elite in Act 1.

‘Maybe not. Maybe he is training under a pretty good master while throwing away a bit of his pride. Perhaps it is not bad. Now that I think about it, those that throw away their pride and seek teachings got stronger much faster.’

Vulcan thought about a certain middle-aged man from Murim that he met when he was just a newbie. The man used to be full of pride and said ‘I was the best in the lower dimension!’ His level was 152 back then.

Having thought this far, Vulcan’s opinion on the man in front of him, who was actively advertising the shop, changed a little.

Vulcan now thought he was rather impressive.

“All right. Let’s go check it out first.”

“Yes, please follow me.”

While following the man, Vulcan thought about Fowaru.

According to Jake, Fowaru was very nit-picky and cold when it came to dealings, but he was most certainly a good man when it came to other things.

Jake was one of the people that Vulcan trusted the most in Act 1.

Although Vulcan had not even met Fowaru yet, Vulcan could not help but to have a good opinion about Fowaru.

Before he realized, they were already in front of a two-floor building made of wood.

The man courteously followed Vulcan around and explained items in the store.

As he proudly explained earlier, there were many useful items here.

Vulcan used the SYSTEM to check the potions here. Although

they were not as good as the one made by Filder, the potions were fairly effective. Vulcan was even thinking that he should come here and purchase them when he runs out of the potions made by Filder.

However, Vulcan came here for a different reason today.

The man was about to explain to Vulcan about a special medicine, but Vulcan tossed a question at him.

“Excuse me.”

“Yes, please go ahead.”

“Actually, I came here because I know who the owner of this shop is. I looked around the entire store on both floors, but I don’t see him anywhere.”

“Ah, do you know my master, Fowaru? But you are a newbie... Ah! You are from Beloong City.”

The man said as if he understood it. Vulcan nodded.

“Yes. I have heard about him from Act 1... So, I would like to meet him. That’s why I came here. Can I please see him?”

“Um... I’m sorry. He is in middle of doing something very important, so it would be hard.”

“Ah... Will it take a long time?”

“About two months...”

Vulcan was very disappointed to hear that.

Vulcan was curious about Fowaru, who is supposed to be Jake’s master. Also, this was going to delay Vulcan’s chance to establish a good relation with Fowaru.

‘It would be extremely helpful if I could get a support from a merchant like I had Jake’s support in Act 1.’

However, Vulcan couldn’t just wait here for two months.

It wasn’t like the equipment that Vulcan currently equipped were seriously lacking in quality. Also, Vulcan still had plenty of potions.

Moreover, Vulcan couldn’t stand the idea of letting his time go to waste when he still had the protective blessing.

“That’s too bad. I’ll definitely come by next time. Can you please tell him that someone who’s a friend of Jake came by?”

“Of course. I’ll definitely tell him. Also, about what I told you earlier... If you get good equipment, please come to the shop before

going to the auction... Master Fowaru will give you a price that won't disappoint you."

Vulcan nodded and left Fowaru's general store.

He then headed to the 'Oracle.'

'No matter how expensive information is, I probably won't have to worry about not having enough money, right? Actually, should I worry about if they have information on Chimera or not?'

Vulcan thought about information guild that he saw in Rubel Continent.

Most of information dealers were low-life thugs who were like thieves or pick-pockets. Those organizations were all low quality groups.

That wasn't all. There were a lot of ones that were not even trustworthy or skilled in information gathering. Vulcan already had a bad impression about so called 'information organization.'

'If they don't give me something that's worth the money, then revenge... is not an option at the moment with my strength. Anyway, I hope they have useful information.'

Vulcan, with eyes full of suspicion, checked out the Oracle's building and then entered.

\*

‘I think I should come here often.’

Vulcan left the building with a satisfied look on his face.

Vulcan had a paper that was neatly folded in his hand. The paper contained the information about the Chimera.

‘They gave me the information in just 10 minutes after I asked. How could they be so quick?’

As if the whole process was laughing at Vulcan’s concerns until now, Oracle’s employee gave Vulcan the information as soon as Vulcan asked, and then the man received the money for it. Vulcan was at a loss for words.

It felt like searching information in a computer would have taken longer than this.

It was actually creeping out Vulcan a little.

‘Well, it cost a lot of money though...’

Still, Vulcan could handle the cost.



Also, he was confident about making it rain money using the SYSTEM's power anytime, so he was not concerned about the expenses.

Going past loud market area, Vulcan got to a quiet place and read the information about the Chimera.

He read it already before, but he went over it again.

‘They started to appear since about 200 years ago. Nobody knows who created them. The exact number of them is not known, but... their number are estimated to be around 100 or more. There has not been any confirmed sighting of them being in group of more than five. They mostly hunt and kidnap rare beings. It is speculated that this is in attempt to further advance the Chimeras. Also... the Chimeras are spread all over, so it is difficult to get away from their sight. If you are not confident about fighting it, hide in the city...’

Vulcan closed his eyes.

Like that, Vulcan tilted his head toward the sky, and took a deep, thick sigh.

‘I had been living so quietly, yet I always get tangled up with these X-like bastards.’

There was one thing that Vulcan thought of as the most important thing when he was making the guidebook for Act 2.

That was ‘not causing bad blood.’

Vulcan was confident about his abilities and potential, so he never thought he would lose his life in an intense battle against monsters.

One thing that he did worry was getting tangled up with someone or some organization before he even realized and suffering losses from it.

As long as he avoided such, he felt like he could achieve level 1000 and clear Act 2 in 50 years. Vulcan was confident about it.

Thinking about how it went in Act 1, Vulcan’s life was never in danger when he was hunting in Act 1.

If he didn’t get bad blood with Bellon or Ho-gyoung, Vulcan would have been able to clear Act 1 more safely.

‘That’s why... I was going to be really quiet in Act 2... and live while just doing level up...!’

It still went all wrong.

It has not even been 1 year since he came to Act 2, but he already became some piece of turd’s target for hunting.

Vulcan raised his hands, wrapped them around his head, and thought about it.

‘Just what did I ever do to deserve such bad luck?

...

There isn’t anything. I didn’t do anything wrong.’

It was the case.

No matter how hard he thought about, there wasn’t anything that he did wrong.

It was unfair. That was making Vulcan feel wronged.

‘If there is a fault... that would be the fact that I’m a Player. Fuck.’

According to the information, the Chimera’s standard for selecting the target was based on how rare the material was.

Rare and unique beings were worth more for research.

Using that standard, from the Chimera’s creator’s stand point, a Player that made it to Act 2 was a material what was as good as Demi-gods or Dragonians.

It was possible that this man must have thought that he got to catch Vulcan after seeing him finishing a hunt and picking up an item.

Even Vulcan thought a Player's body was full of mysteries. He could only imagine how curious this man must be about Players.

‘Fuck, this son of bitch. Instead of trying to reach new heights while helping others like God-beasts or Demi-gods...’

Toward a faceless creator of the Chimeras, Vulcan poured out curses inside. It felt like Vulcan would explode from anger if he didn't.

Of course, it didn't make Vulcan feel any better.

The Chimera problem that Vulcan was now facing was too big for something like this to make him feel better.

Vulcan was in agony like that for a while. He then got a grip and quickly left Espo City.

It was because he thought that even the time spent agonizing over was a waste.

‘According to the information, even the strongest of the Chimeras identified so far is... about as strong as a Commander

Tree.'

The one that Vulcan faced at the forest area had level of 762.

It seemed that one was the strongest unit.

It still turned out in Vulcan's favor during the encounter. However, this whole ordeal was most certainly not good for him.

These Chimeras were powerful. Vulcan was not sure if he could beat them even in his tip-top condition.

Even just two of them would be enough to make Vulcan fall prey to them and get dragged to the creator's laboratory.

'I can never know. More might charge at me at once.'

If the creator thought highly of a Player's worth, it was possible that he might bring more Chimeras.

Because of this, Vulcan had no intention of spending his time away so leisurely.

Vulcan only had nine years and six months of time left where he could focus on hunting and leveling up without having to worry about Chimera's attacks.

‘I need to get to a height where I can handle at least three Chimeras at once. If I don’t even get there, I might lose before even having the chance to use the Enlightened-being summon.’

Vulcan was determined.

He already had a determined mind to begin with in order to save his family and the world. He had been hunting with that conviction. However, now the situation was direr.

It felt like a huge penalty was added to a game that didn’t have a time limit.

‘Thanks for whipping me so I won’t get lazy.’

Thinking about the creator who must be diligently spreading Chimera right now, Vulcan ground his teeth.

‘I’ll pay you back with interest.’

\*

Using his volcano like fury as the fuel, Vulcan quickly moved to his next hunting ground.

His next hunting ground was ‘Graveyard of the Cursed Ones.’

It was a hunting ground with undead, similar to ‘Cursed Underground Graveyard.’ According to Beruneru, monsters with level estimated to be 700 appeared here.

Vulcan’s original plan was go to somewhere with 600 level monsters first and come here afterwards.

However, Vulcan was concerned, thinking that,

‘If I take it slow like that, I might really die right after the protective blessing ends!’

Because of this, Vulcan decided to take a bit of risk and come to this place.

Of course, Vulcan didn’t just pick this place without giving it any thought.

Thanks to the power of Demi-god, Vulcan obtained advantageous attributes against undead.

Using the SYSTEM, Vulcan read the information about Demi-god’s power.

[Exploit rank: Hero]

Lightning – Stun abnormality added. Additional damage to

evil (Devil, Undead)

Flame – Damage over time added. Additional damage to evil (Devil, Undead)

Swordsmanship – Attack power increased. Additional damage to evil (Devil, Undead)

Demi-god's power was holy. It denied all evil.

Vulcan thought that he could use this and handle several 700 level undead monsters coming at him at once.

However, there was something here that Vulcan didn't think about at all.

"From here to there is our area!"

"Your area my ass. With your skill, do you think you can cover this whole area?"

"What? You runt..."

"Hum. Hum. If you are going to fight, please go outside of the graveyard and..."



“Just who are you!”

‘What in the world... What the...’

It was like a beach in middle of summer.

Vulcan could not tell if people came to the hunting ground or if monsters washed up into middle of people. It was a total chaos here. Vulcan opened his mouth wide.

“Why are there so many people here...”

With a devastated look on his face, Vulcan mumbled.

## Chapter 67 - Badblood (2)

---

Vulcan thought it didn't make any sense for there to be this many people here.

Of course, it was not like the hunting ground was useless to everyone.

There were priests who were traditionally strong against undead by default.

By destroying evil undead, devils and others, the priests gained strength. It made sense for priests to be here in the graveyard of the cursed ones.

However, there were hardly any priests here. Vulcan could count them with fingers because there were so few of them.

There were people of all sorts of professions.

There was a muscular fighter who probably had been fighting for several hundred years. There was a grand mage who was indiscriminately shooting magic with a stern face. There was a swordsman in Murim style getup who was demonstrating flashy sword techniques.

There were, quite literally, all sorts of people camping in the graveyard.

‘This looks like... one of those special event days for experience points on online games that happens once in a while...’

Confused, Vulcan brought out the guidebook from his inventory and opened it.

‘Did I confuse this place with somewhere else and come to the wrong hunting ground?’

This was the reason.

However, even the guidebook said this hunting ground should be mostly free of people.

### [Hunting Ground – Graveyard of the Cursed Ones]

It’s a hunting ground with undead monsters estimated to be around level 700. Unlike the other undead hunting ground, the ‘Graveyard of the Knights,’ strengthened ghouls appear here. There are a lot of people going to the Graveyard of the Knights to get the weapons and armors of the death knights, so that place is popular. However, the Graveyard of the Cursed Ones hardly have anyone coming, so it is a good hunting ground to consider.

‘This is the right place. Ugh. Did something change in the past 700 years?’

Vulcan looked at the hunting ground again.

It was a pretty wide area, but the place was packed with people showing off their skills that the area didn't look so wide anymore.

Also, it seemed slaying monsters was not their only goal.

It looked like they were looking for something.

'751... 773... 741... 804... They are all high levelers. What in the world are they doing here?'

Vulcan wasn't going to be able to hunt here now, but Vulcan was more curious about what was happening here. He started to look around to find someone he could ask.

While Vulcan was at it, fortunately, he found someone he knew.

'I know less than 10 people in Act 2, yet what a coincidence.'

Vulcan walked quickly to approach the man and called his name.

"Mr. Phantaero!"

"Uh, uh? Vulcan! By any chance, you are also here to..."

Phantaero was looking at Vulcan as if he was trying to say if

Vulcan was here because he heard something about the place. Vulcan shook his head.

“I’m here just to level up. What’s going on here? Is there this many people here usually?”

“Ah, it looks like you are not here because of the rumor. Huh, geez. I thought you were here out of greed. Haha.”

Phantaero laughed in relief.

Vulcan hushed Phantaero with his gaze. Phantaero, after looking back at the hunting ground once, said as if he was not liking the situation.

“It’s because of the Holy Sword.”

“Holy Sword?”

“There was a rumor that said the clue about the Holy Sword is here. I don’t know where the information leaked from, but... It seemed like everyone who are interested in it knows. God damn it.”

Confused, Vulcan asked again.

“Isn’t a Holy Sword useful only to a brave warrior? I think not all of those people are brave warriors.”

“That’s what I’m saying! Those thugs... Ugh.”

Phantaero continued after sighing big.

“Of course, it takes a brave hero to bring about the full potential of the Holy Sword. However, even if others used it, it would still be a great treasure, it would be like the master sword of all master swords. Most people don’t try to get it because they understand the situation for brave heroes, but... It looks like all of those gathered here are rotten bunches. Tsk.”

Having heard what Phantaero said, even Vulcan’s mood was spoiled.

Ofcouse, a great treasure like the Holy Sword was definitely something anyone would be interested in having.

To someone who was not able to achieve a new height due to facing a wall, a sword with the power of god could provide a breakthrough.

The people here could be seeking the power of the Holy Sword after several hundreds or over a thousand years of hardships.

However, according to The Six, the Holy Sword was made for brave warriors. It was like a gift bestowed from the greatest of all gods so brave warriors could save their worlds.

Instead of lending their strength to brave warriors on finding the sword, just to fill their own desires, they were getting in front of the brave warriors who were struggling with all of their strengths to protect billions of lives.

No matter how Vulcan thought about it, this was hard to accept.

Vulcan was also carrying a burden like a brave warrior.

Naturally, Vulcan could understand Phantaero's frustration, and Vulcan looked at the people on the graveyard with unkind eyes.

"They are really rotten bunches. This is a matter where billions of lives are at stakes."

"Ugh, I'm sure they all have reasons that are making them desperate, but I cannot help but to get angry as a brave warrior."

Phantaero shook his head left and right.

Looking at him, Vulcan carefully asked.

"Still... You cannot give up, right?"

"Of course not. I don't stand a good chance, but... I have to try everything in middle of all those people. I've heard that a Holy Sword eventually falls in the hand of the brave warrior. It means it will be in my hands eventually, right? Haha."

‘I’ve never heard of such before.’

Still, Vulcan didn’t say it out loud.

Vulcan genuinely hoped Phantaero would find the Holy Sword and save his world. So, to cheer him up, Vulcan went along with it.

“That’s right. In the end, it will go and find its owner. When you draw a Holy Sword later, please show it to me before you go back to the lower dimension.”

“Um? Hahahaha! Yes, yes. I definitely will. If I cannot find where you are, I’ll find you even if I have to ask the Oracle.”

“It’s a promise.”

Vulcan smiled as he faced Phantaero.

However, Vulcan sighed soon and complained.

“Ugh. Anyway, it looks like I won’t be able to level up here.”

“Ah, you said you are here to level up. You are incredible. You decided to come here when you still have the mark of a newbie...”

Phantaero was praising Vulcan. It was like he was painting



Vulcan's face with gold. However, it didn't make Vulcan feel better.

It didn't change the fact that this ended up being a waste for Vulcan.

Vulcan was fired up and rushed here. However, in an instant, Vulcan was struck by bucket of cold water and the flame was extinguished. That's how it felt.

Vulcan regretted that he didn't think things through. He regretted about not getting information about the hunting grounds while he was at the Oracle. The thought was filling his head.

'I have a ton of money. Why didn't I think of that? The information I have are 700 years old. They could have changed. Ugh. It cannot be helped. Should I go back to the city and update the information on hunting grounds?'

Vulcan carefully thought about what to do.

Piercing through Vulcan's thoughts, Phantaero's voice could be heard.

"If you don't want anything else and you are purely interested in just hunting monsters, there is another place that's pretty good."

"... Where is that? On the map that I have, there isn't any other place nearby..."

“What are you talking about? Is the map about 500 years old?”

“Um... It’s about 700 years old.”

Phantaero found it to be ridiculous. He said,

“I was joking, but since you said that, I’m sorry I asked.”

“Haha...”

Vulcan smiled awkwardly.

Facing him, Phantaero laughed with him and then said,

“Anyway, if you run straight in that direction, there is another hunting ground. The monster levels are not as high as here, but... The place is practically devoid of people, so you can probably level up there without getting bothered by anyone. What do you think? Are you interested?”

Vulcan was interested.

Vulcan thought he should consider the place’s characteristics, but he liked the fact that there were hardly any people there.

“Please tell me about the place in detail.”

“I will. After hearing it, if you think it is not a bad place to check out, try going there.”

Phantaero started to layout the description about the place in detail.

---

‘The place is better than I thought.’

This was Vulcan’s rating about the place that Phantaero recommended after hunting here for a week.

The place was called ‘Poison Crater Field.’ It was said to have been created about 200 years ago.

The monsters here were at about 630 levels, so they were not significantly different from the forest area. However, the monsters poured out in far greater numbers here, so Vulcan was able to level up faster.

Moreover, there was nothing to be gained from slaying monsters here. Because of that, Vulcan was not competing with anyone over monsters.

The hunting ground was like a custom made place for Vulcan.

## Kururuwakul Kuakruruh

From over hundred craters, poisonous monsters popped out endlessly.

Mixed with excrements and poison, their semi-transparent body looked hideous. Although they looked slimy and slow, they were very quick.

They compressed their bodies like springs and jumped like springs to approach Vulcan, so their movements were hard to deal with.

However, there was not a single monster that managed to get close to Vulcan.

Pazuzuzukzuzu

Whoosh

Kiiiiiaaak

Vulcan was casting several dozens of lightning field per second.

Lighting field was a mid level magic. Compared to the Firefield, it was lacking in damage. Also, because it was not a continuous-damage type, the magic was not efficient.

However, with the boost from the Demi-god’s power, there was not any other lightning attack that could top this one.

Because of endless lightning magic filling the ground, poisonous monsters that were made mostly of water were constantly being stunned.

Also, Vulcan poured Hell’s Flame Lightning and Firefield above them while they were stunned.

[Experience points went up.]

[Experience points went up.]

[Experience points went up.]

Listening to the dying monsters and SYSTEM’s notification,

Vulcan smiled in joy.

As if they didn't like Vulcan being like that, the poisonous monsters spewed out poisonous gas in their death. However, it didn't work against Vulcan.

As soon as the poisonous gas reached Vulcan's body, it got neutralized by the blue light. Watching this, Vulcan thought,

‘The Blue Dragon's Breath... It's far more useful than I thought.’

It was a majestic and mysterious energy bestowed on Vulcan by the Blue Dragon.

Vulcan thought it only boosted his stats. However, from this experience, he realized it also significantly boosted the resistance against various abnormal status.

‘If it wasn't for this boost... I would have either gone to look for another hunting ground or pay a lot of money to buy expensive antidote potions.’

Vulcan was feeling very fortunate that he was able to establish a good working relation with the Blue Dragon.

Vulcan took a peek at the inventory and checked the vitality marbles.



There were a lot more of them now, and that made Vulcan feel confident.

“For Players, in the end, it is all about hunting. Just hunting.”

Vulcan mumbled as if he was reciting spells. Toward him, poisonous monsters started to swarm at him from the surroundings.

With joy, Vulcan started casting magic.

“Gather up quickly. It’s hard for me to wait.”

Like a farmer cutting the rice plants, Vulcan endlessly harvested the monsters.

[Experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

Pleasant notification sounds echoed on Vulcan’s ears.

[Experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

[Demi-God Vulcan]

[600Lv (+30)]

“Phew... I think it is about time I left this place.”

With a tight schedule, Vulcan had been hunting here for a year. Through it, Vulcan achieved level 600.

To Vulcan’s surprise, not a single resident visited the Poison Crater Field.

Because of this, Vulcan was able to level up efficiently without being bothered by anyone. However, it was time for him to leave this place.

‘I’ve exploited this place a lot... It is time I really went to a 700 level hunting ground.’

Vulcan had been visiting resident camps nearby to rest occasionally and check. He heard that the popularity of the Graveyard of the Cursed Ones died out.

Vulcan was thinking he should level up to 650 there and go back to Espo City.

‘But... There is something I should check before that.’

Vulcan was excited with hunting all this time, so he didn't notice. He noticed this only a week ago.

He realized that no monsters were coming out of one of the craters.

If someone observed the craters carefully from the start, it would have taken only an hour to notice this. However, Vulcan was in middle of several hundred monsters swarming at him to kill him, so he realized this only recently.

Vulcan, with his face full of anticipations, looked at the broken crater.

It was still not generating any monsters.

‘This... has a high likelihood of being the place of a hidden quest. No, I am certain!’

Vulcan was making a conjecture, but he was almost certain. He put his body into the poisonous crater.

He had no hesitation.

If the place was a hidden quest, its entrance was obviously going to be a safe place. Also, if there was a monster suddenly jumping

out, Vulcan was confident about handling it.

Hoping that the place would be a hidden quest area, Vulcan slowly went further into the crater.

The inside was deeper than he thought.

It was like a cave. The long corridor continued like an entrance to a dungeon. Walking along the path, Vulcan was becoming more sure of it.

And... Finally, there were new existences that greeted Vulcan.

Vulcan cringed bigtime and mumbled,

“... What the hell.”

## Chapter 68 - Badblood (3)

---

[Chimera B-092]

[749Lv]

Kruwaruwaruwak.

Kiiiiaaaa.

The Chimeras roared ferociously as soon as they saw Vulcan.

Vulcan instinctively activated the Thunder God's Might and injected mana in to the beast bird KinaKina.

He was going to borrow the Blue Dragon's power because he was facing monsters that would be difficult for him to fight alone.

However, Vulcan soon realized that there was no need, so he retrieved the mana from KinaKina.

After that, with his mind at ease, Vulcan observed the bastards.

Kuooooaaaa.

Kakang!

“Hit me all day long. It’s not like it’s going to make me tired. It will just make you exhausted.”

Vulcan ignored two Chimeras that were attacking him repeatedly. Instead, Vulcan focused his mana.

Whooosh.

Flowing along Vulcan’s left arm, a flame was ignited and it started to add more heat.

The Chimeras in front of Vulcan were powerful like the Commander Tree. However, instead of defense, their attributes were focused on offense and speed.

With a magic attack generated with enough effort put in to it, it was possible to destroy them with a single strike.

“Eat this.”

The two Chimeras beat on Vulcan like blacksmiths pounding on steel.

To one of the Chimeras, Vulcan swung his fist.

It was a strike with Ifrit's Fist coated on to Vulcan's fist using a third of his mana.

Fuwhahak.

Kigigigigigik.

‘As I thought, this isn't making my exploit go up. Does it not count because I was aided by the protective blessing? It didn't give me any experience points, and it didn't give me any exploits either. What worthless turds.’

With moments to spare, Vulcan mumbled as he focused mana again.

After a moment, Vulcan watched the other Chimera falling just like the first one. As he watched it collapse, Vulcan thought,

‘Could this place be... the base of operation for the Chimera maker?’

The situation more than warranted such a speculation.

The Poisonous Crater Field was a hunting ground that nobody came by for a year.

There were over a hundred craters in this field. If the base was created in secret among the craters, it was not going to be exposed

to the outside world so easily.

Not only that, the Chimeras that were standing guard as the gatekeepers were fairly high in levels, so they would have easily handled anyone that came to the Poisonous Crater Field.

‘He probably didn’t think someone with the protective blessing for newbies would come.’

Vulcan tapped his head with his finger.

It was good that he destroyed the Chimeras that were coming at him earlier. However, Vulcan have not decided if he should go in further or make a run for it now.

Vulcan couldn’t even make a guess about what could be inside.

However, he didn’t think about it for long.

Vulcan had the protective blessing.

That filled Vulcan with boundless confidence.

‘It’s not like there are monsters inside. I have an invincibility cheat key. Why should I be afraid of anything?’

Vulcan entered further into the depth of the pathway.



He walked with confidence like an inspector that came to punish a corrupt governor.

To begin with, Vulcan was already targeted by the Chimera maker.

Players were rarer than Demi-gods. With a Player's body now in the realm of Act 2, the Chimera maker was not going to just sit quietly and watch. It was more likely that he was waiting with his eyes locked on Vulcan like an eagle, waiting for the protective blessing to expire.

All these meant it was not like the Chimera maker was going to say 'thank you, I will not target you anymore' if Vulcan left quietly.

'Now that we have bad bloods between us, I might as well give him a present before leaving here.'

Having thought about it, Vulcan realized it would be best for him to deal huge damage to the Chimera maker while Vulcan was still a newbie.

Vulcan marched forward relentlessly while taking mana potion.

It didn't matter if this was the Chimera maker's main base or one of his secondary bases.

Vulcan was intending to destroy everything inside.

Time went by like that.

Around the time all of the thoughts inside Vulcan's head was getting organized, a large underground cave appeared in front of Vulcan.

“ ... ”

In silence, Vulcan looked around the place.

There were all sorts of strange tools, parts of bodies reeking foul stench, and fluids of various colors.

However, there were something else special in the place that were overshadowing the rest.

There were large cylindrical glass tubes.

They were completely filled with unidentified clear liquid, and inside, there were fearsome looking monsters, the kind from anyone's worst nightmare.

Having more than four limbs were among the normal sides.

Some of them looked as if someone collected only the strongest

parts of various monsters and fit them together like assembling toys. They looked more evil than the devils from the depth of hell.

There were over 50 of these tubes.

Vulcan cringed and used the SYSTEM.

[Incomplete Chimera D-001]

[661Lv]

[Incomplete Chimera D-002]

[653Lv]

...

[Incomplete Chimera D-054]

[602Lv]

“... A Chimera Factory, well, something like that?”

It seemed that the Chimeras that had been targeting Vulcan were made in this place.

Their appearances and levels were completely different from the completed Chimeras that he encountered. However, having checked them with the SYSTEM, Vulcan confirmed that their names were similar in format.

Also, even though they looked different, there was one similarity.

They looked bizarre. They looked like things were taken from here and there and stitched together. They lacked coherence.

‘This place is definitely a Chimera factory. The owner... does not appear to be here.’

If he was here, there was no way he was going to just sit still.

Of course, there was nothing he could have done even if he came at Vulcan all infuriated.

Vulcan looked around the inside of the cave again.

He carefully looked at each of the 54 incomplete Chimeras and the glass tubes. As if he made a decision, Vulcan nodded once and drew the Heavenly Lightning Blade.

Woooong.

Chizik Chizizizik.

Golden aura extended out in length.

An incredible power could be felt from the blade, enough to make even 750 level boss monsters to feel fear.

Vulcan's Thunder God Blade energy possessed greatest destructive power among all single strike techniques. He focused this energy into the Heavenly Lightning Blade.

Chuzuk... Chuzizizik.

The Thunder God Blade technique drew in Vulcan's mana and the Demi-god's power at a fearsome rate.

Its size was smaller than the one used during the fight against the Commander Tree. However, its destructive power far surpassed the last time.

During the battle against the Commander Tree, Vulcan drew the technique in a hurry. This time, he was taking the time to carefully adjust and compress the power.

It was only natural for there to be a difference.

The technique's power was immensely more powerful now. Although it was the same technique, it would have made anyone feel almost sorry to even compare this to the last time.

The incredible power was making the cave shake. Feeling the power, the Chimeras inside the tubes started to twitch.

They were unconsciously responding to the immense power that was about to be unleashed to them.

Kiuuuaaaaa.

Kuuuwrrrrrrrraaak.

In their incomplete states, several tens of Chimeras were trying to escape the tubes in order to survive.

However, Vulcan's Thunder God Blade didn't let them be.

The majestic light was almost blindingly bright.

It was swung with raw intensity, enough to sweep away everything on its path.

Pachizizizizik!

Boom! Ba Ba Boom!

The power that was shot from Demi-god Vulcan's hand destroyed all Chimeras in an instant.

---

“Fuck!”

The Chimera maker was leisurely eating a cookie. However, the old man ran to the monitor room after hearing the loud alarm.

The alarm was not the kind for when a useful prey was discovered. This time, the alarm was the kind that signaled there was an intruder.

‘I had two of B rank Chimeras there. He couldn't have gone through them, could he?’

The place was a new Chimera factory that he made 50 years ago.

With the goal of adding poisonousness to Chimeras he had created so far, he made the place in secret, deep inside the hidden place of the Poisonous Crater Field.

Unlike other craters, this one didn't have any monsters coming out. Also, when he went in further into the place, there was a spacious cave inside, so he found it surprising.

He was immediately impressed that such a perfect, natural hidden place existed, so he moved his materials there right away.

Saying the place was made by him would not have been accurate. It was more accurate to say that he simply moved there.

He liked the place better than his own main base where he carved the cave himself.

There hasn't been anyone coming by in the past 50 years, so the Chimera maker was thinking about moving his main base there, however...

‘That place was attacked? This bastard must have absolutely nothing to do... Who is... It is that Player!’

Before long, the old man saw Vulcan in the cave. The old man started to pull out his hair.

‘Really. What does he have to gain by going all the way inside the poisonous crater? What's he doing there?’

The old man didn't even consider the possibility of Vulcan going in there knowing what's inside.

Even others in Act 2 who had long history of badblood with the Chimera maker have not found this place.

He figured that the chance of a complete newbie finding the place to screw with him was close to zero.



‘Kuk... Anyway, that’s not the important part. That runt... it looks like he is up to something...’

Extremely concerned, the old man watched Vulcan through the screen.

He wanted to rush over there right now, but he couldn’t.

It would have taken him time to get there, which was a problem. Moreover, the bigger problem was that there was nothing he could do even if he went over there.

‘Even if I went there, that bastard is a newbie with the protective blessing... Damn, fuck!’

The old man just prayed.

To just sit there and do nothing, he hated to see all the effort and resources poured into the place going to waste.

‘Please, just think there are some mysterious stuff there and leave quietly.’

The old man hoped for that. Feeling desperate, he prayed to every gods that he knew, and then he prayed again some more.

However, it didn’t go as he hoped.

Uuuuung.

There was Vulcan aiming his fully drawn out gigantic lightning blade toward the glass tubes.

Seeing Vulcan in the stance, the old man shouted loud as if Vulcan was right next to him.

“No, you bastard!”

Boom! Ba Ba Boom!

Chizik.... Chizik.

“ ... ”

Obviously, his voice didn't reach Vulcan. Along with destructive explosion sound, the visual to the underground cave was cut-off.

Before the video feed was cut-off, the old man saw glimpses of the remains of incomplete Chimeras.

Thinking about what he saw, the old man plummeted to the ground without any strength.

‘Ugh, fuck... It was really hard to make all that...’

The old man suddenly lost astronomical portion of his forces. He slowly mumbled.

“The protective blessing... Isn’t this too unfair?”

He was okay with the blessing preventing people from harming each other.

Without it, countless newbies in Act 2 would have died before having the time to adapt to the place.

However, he felt that this was too much. Vulcan just destroyed his properties at will. However, the Chimera maker was not able to have his vengeance for the damage.

‘Rumithus, that runt... He is so thoughtless...’

The old man cursed at Rumithus inside for bestowing protective blessings to newbies.

It seemed the old man was completely ignoring the fact that he was desperately praying to gods only a moment ago.

Actually, the old man was faulting Rumithus for the wrong reasons.

Of course, a newbie could abuse the protective blessing, say ‘gut my stomach later if you can’ and destroy others’ properties.

However, no newbies in the right mind would do something like that. 10 years later, they would just become targets to powerful beings who far surpassed them in strength. This fact was obvious.

Anyone doing something like that had to be insane.

Of course, the old man, who sustained damage, was not going to feel any better to know any of this.

“Ugh, ugh. This son of a ... bitch... I’m going to catch you no matter what. I’m going to study you down to the individual cells of your body and research them...”

The old man glared at the cut-off screen as if he was going to burn a hole through it with his gaze. The Chimera maker vowed vengeance.

That day, their badblood deepened.

---

Kugugugugu.

Due to a huge shock, the cave shook as if it was going to collapse.

The ceiling started to form spider web like cracks. The walls were broken all over the place due to not being able to withstand the shock from the Thunder God Blade.

The floor was also cracking as if it was going to sink immediately.

‘Maybe it was fortunate that the damage to the cave itself was only this much.’

Vulcan carefully adjusted so that the power won’t leak out, but still, Vulcan thought it was fortunate that the damage ended with this much after being exposed to the technique’s power.

“ ... ”

Vulcan watched the shaking cave for a moment and then turned his body around.

Now that his business here was concluded, all he had left to do was to just leave the place.

Vulcan, disappointed, thought about,

‘It’s good that I reduced the number of Chimeras, but I was hoping this place would be a hidden quest...’

Vulcan was about 80% sure that the place was a hidden quest. Now, he was going back empty handed. That made him feel full of disappointment.

“Well, it cannot be helped.”

Vulcan quit his pointless thought.

It was not like this place was in the guidebook.

Based on the information from The Six, Vulcan actually had another place where he speculated that it must be a hidden quest. He just needed to try there.

Vulcan shook his head about three times and shook off his disappointment. Vulcan headed to the entry way.

Kuwarurururu.

Finally, the underground cave's floor collapsed.

Thinking it was a good thing, Vulcan peeked a smile and quickly left the entry way.

The entry way was still holding without any damage as if it was being held by an unknown power. However, he could never know for certain.

‘If it collapses, getting out of here could get bothersome... Um?’

Vulcan stopped all of sudden.

Vulcan, who was in deep thoughts for a moment, turned his body

around and traced back the way he just came through.

It was because there was something that was bothering him.

‘Why is the floor collapsing?’

If it was an underground cave created by carving the ground, it would make sense for it to develop cracks, but it was odd that the floor would collapse.

Unless there was an empty space below, it was not possible.

Vulcan was starting to get excited. Suppressing his excitement, Vulcan headed to the collapsed cave.

He was thinking there might be something. The anticipation was making his steps faster.

He didn't have high hopes for it. He didn't want to be disappointed twice in a day.

‘I'm just going to see it. It probably is not it, but I never know, so...’

Vulcan put up a face that pretended he had no greed whatsoever. With heavy steps, he walked past the entry way and got to the destination.

As he thought, there was an empty space under the cave.

It was a deep, wide crater, enough to make one think of the abyss to hell.

He carefully gulped and sent a large light magic to the crater.

And then, there was a notification from the SYSTEM.

Ring Ring...

[Quest Generated!]

[Hidden Quest – Eradicate the Master Gang-Shi, the boss monster of the Ancient [Gang-Shi](#) Factory.]

[Difficulty – B+ (Asgard Standard)]

[Reward – Choose one from skills or items]

Pierce through Poisonous Gang-Shi and Blood Gang-Shi, the cursed existences created by the ancients using extraordinary manufacturing technique, and eradicate the Master Gang-Shi]

\*The limit on the number of people who can participate in the hidden quest – One person



\*Boss room level limit – 650Lv (Recommended level, 750 or above)

\*Sturdy body, swift movement, deadly poison on its claws... You could lose your life in a moment's notice if you are not careful. Be cautious.

[TL: "Gang-Shi" is the Korean reading of "Jiang-Shi", a fictional monster from Asia. It's a corpse that's frozen to death, yet it is still animated to haunt people. Because the body is frozen, it is sturdy, but it is not able to articulate its joints much. It moves by jumping like a spring without bending its knees. Of course, the author's version of Gang-Shi might have some differences compared to the traditional story.]

“I was lucky.”

Vulcan finally let it all out in joy.

# Chapter 69 - Strengthened

---

‘Phew... If it was not a hidden quest area again, I would have been so frustrated.’

Vulcan smiled as he looked at semi-transparent notification window for the quest.

This was the first hidden quest since Vulcan came to Act 2.

It would have been odd if Vulcan was not happy about it.

Of course, hidden quest areas were not always great on every aspects.

For instance, in the Act 1's Cursed Underground Graveyard, the reward and the item from slaying the boss monsters were all lacking.

Still, compared to the usual monsters, the monsters in hidden quests were worth the anticipations.

There was not a single reason for Vulcan to hate the hidden quests.

‘Also, this place is restricted to just one person, so it is impossible for anyone to get in my way. Well, it is not like anyone could possibly stumble in here, but...’

Vulcan jumped down from the entrance.

Tadak...

After a light landing, Vulcan looked around.

The walls were made of stones that were different in composition from the walls in the underground cave.

The walls were smooth and shiny like polished marble stones. However, it had ominous black tint that lingered.

Upon closer observation, Vulcan noticed that there were various drawings engraved on the walls.

‘Pictures of human dissections and experimentations... They are unpleasant things to look at.’

Making a conjecture based on the explanation about the quest, it seemed the drawings were depicting the process of research and manufacture of the Gang-shis. (TLN: Also, known as Jiang-shi)

Vulcan looked around the wall and watched the drawings. Doing so rapidly spoiled his mood.

It was because looking at the Gang-shi manufacture process made him think about Chimeras.

Vulcan wondered if Chimera factory in the ancient time would have looked like this. The drawings were making him think that.

Vulcan steadily glared at the wall which had the man looking overjoyed after making Gang-shis.

It made Vulcan think about the Chimera maker who was after Vulcan. The thought made Vulcan cringe.

Boom!

The wall with the engraved drawing of the man was destroyed by Vulcan's fist.

It didn't really make Vulcan feel completely better, but Vulcan felt it was a little better.

"Next time, I'll find your main base and obliterate it."

Vulcan mumbled as if he chewed and spat it. He slowly approached the door.

The door was green as if it was painted over with poison.

There were even letters written on it.



[Curse to the bastards that disrupted the order of the world, evil beings who treated people's lives carelessly and created abominations. They will never be able to rest. In eternity, suffer in this place.]

‘It's perfect with the quest's concept. It is far more detailed than in Act 1.’

It didn't feel like ordinary monsters that were common. It felt like real ancient monsters were captured and imprisoned inside.

‘Of course, it doesn't matter to me.’

Vulcan opened the door, which made a creaking sound.

There were light spheres embedded on the ceiling wall in consistent intervals, and under the light, there were cursed existences slowly revealing themselves.

Vulcan raised his Demi-god and magic powers.

The lightning flowing along his blade generated fearsome sound.

\*

They wore warrior's getup, a black colored fabric with extravagant patterns embroiled on, and had a large beads neckless

hanging on the neck.

There were talisman written in blood attached to their body, and they had abhorrent, disfigured nose, eyes and mouths.

However, Vulcan had been looking at them for a day now. It no longer fazed Vulcan.

<p>[Poison Gang-shi Go-gwang]</p> <p>[671Lv]</p>
<p>[Poison Gang-shi Nam Gung-un]</p> <p>[666Lv]</p>

The bastards were exactly what Vulcan thought they would look like when he was a child.

Due to rigor mortis, their bodies were completely stiff. They were not able to bend their joints properly. Their movements were stiff like a piece of log.

However...

They were incredibly fast, completely ignoring the abovementioned drawbacks, so Vulcan could not take them lightly.

Pat!

Boom!

A Gang-shi charged at Vulcan in a straight line. He dodged it using the lightning dragon step. The Gang-shi that went past Vulcan collided with the wall and caused a loud noise.

There were broken pieces of stones and dust cloud rising up.

Piercing through the dust cloud, the Gang-shi charged at Vulcan once again. Vulcan thought,

‘They are just like the cheetahmen... They are incredibly fast. Also, they are far sturdier than the cheetamen. Their attacks are heavy as well...’

Cheetamen had the weakness of not being able to take much hit for their level, but these runts were not like that.

The move just now was also different.

A cheetaman would have adjusted the speed accordingly just in case of running in to the wall. However, these runts formed a synergy between brainless actions and sturdy body, special traits of

undead. Their attacks were crude, but fearsome. The Gang-shis were repeating such attacks endlessly.

Boom, Boom, Boom, Boom.

Boomba boom!

Of course, Vulcan was at a greater height than the monsters, so they only managed to run in to the wall repeatedly.

Vulcan had been dodging the Gang-shis using rhythmical-like movements to the sound of beating instruments.

From the blade on his right hand, an unstoppable lightning poured out.

Pazuzuzuzuk.

It was the Thunder God Blade technique.

It was not as powerful as the last time in the underground cave, which felt like it was going to cut through the sky and the ground. However, enough power to slice through the Gang-shi's neck was layered on the blade.

With ice-cold eyes, Vulcan glared at the poisonous Gang-shi. Vulcan cut off its neck at the moment it charged at him.



It was like dodging a cannonball that was fired at himself and then slicing it with a blade. It was incredibly difficult. However, to Vulcan, who maintained peak concentration, it was not that difficult.

Boom.

Baboom!

A poisonous Gang-shi's head was chopped off.

Because it was charging at Vulcan when its head was cut off, its head and the body ran into the wall separately. Again, the impact formed spider-web cracks on the wall.

Targeting Vulcan who was looking at this, the second Gang-shi charged at him. However, it met the same fate as the one earlier and ended up rolling on the floor.

[Your experience points went up.]

[All at once, you fought and defeated two opponents that are stronger than you!]

[You achieved a new exploit.]

[Your exploit points went up.]

---

‘Now even the exploits won’t go up easily. Well, I had been sucking the honey from this place until now, so I shouldn’t complain.’

Vulcan disengaged the Thunder God Blade and picked up the items.

He noticed the vitality marbles among the items and smiled.

‘I don’t know about other things, but it seems hidden dungeons certainly give more vitality marbles.’

That alone was making this place worth being called ‘hidden.’

Also, because the monsters here were considered undead, it was a good fit for Vulcan who possessed Demi-god’s power.

The Demi-god’s power had the additional attribute of dealing extra damage to evil monsters. Because of this, even though Vulcan drew the Thunder God Blade with less magic power, it was still more than enough to cut through poisonous Gang-shis.

However, despite this, maintaining the Thunder God Blade for a long time was taking a toll on Vulcan.

The technique was more powerful than others, but it was proportionally more taxing in mana.

‘I reduced the mana to exact amount needed to cut the Gang-shis, but... Compared to before, the mana is being drained rapidly. This place is more difficult than the poison crater field.’

Vulcan went to find the next target and repeated casting and disengaging the Thunder God Blade.

Pazuzuzuzuk.

Psuuuuuuu.

To ordinary people’s eyes, it may have looked like Vulcan was casting and disengaging as if he was doing it quickly without any preparation time. However, Vulcan was very dissatisfied.

The Thunder God Blade was not a skill that was officially registered as one in the SYSTEM. It was a combination technique that was formed from the Demi-god’s power and Vulcan’s exceptional understanding of the lightning and mana management. Casting it easily and conveniently through the SYSTEM was not possible.

So, to improve the casting speed, Vulcan had no other way but to achieve it through the improvement in his magic skill as if he was using the magic in traditional way.

‘With a slow-poke casting speed like this... Using it instantaneously like flipping on and off switch won’t be possible.’

Until now, Vulcan had been using the technique like it was a special move.

The technique was not about magic efficiency. It was about maximizing the destructive power.

It was too inefficient to be used on slaying small-fly monsters like now or maintain it for a long duration.

However, Vulcan was using it over and over because...

‘If it becomes possible for me to control the Thunder God Blade to the point I can activate it exactly at the moment of impact... Maybe I will be able to use it like ordinary skills without taxing me so much?’

Theoretically, it was possible.

At Vulcan’s current height, he was able to cast and disengage at an instant for magic such as Thunder God’s Might, Ifrit’s Fist and others, which were beyond high level magic such as Firefield.

However, the Thunder God Blade required even higher level control.

The amount of mana required to cast it was at a whole another dimension.

If the Thunder God's Might was a pond, the Ifrit's Fist was like a lake, and the Thunder God Blade required an ocean worth of mana.

The control difficulty increased exponentially with the amount of mana required, so even Vulcan was having a hard time.

It was an art that required a long time honing one's best skill, even for a very talented individual.

‘Still, I think it might work.’

Magic.

Of all magic techniques in flame and lightning, there was not a single thing that Vulcan failed to achieve after training with determination.

Beyond the Rubel Continent, Vulcan overcame the Beloong City and even arrived at the land of Act 2.

He no longer doubted his talent.

‘It won't be possible to cast and disengage magic without any delay like the SYSTEM, but... let's try to make it so it will be close to that speed.’

Once this became possible, Vulcan was going to be able to hunt much faster than the current speed.

It would have substantially reduced the time Vulcan would have to spend waiting after drinking mana potion to replenish his mana.

Also, what Vulcan looked forward to even more was against boss monsters.

‘When facing a difficult opponent like the Commander Tree that would definitely lead to a long battle, being able to do this would be a huge boost in my offensive power.’

Vulcan smiled a little as he imagined himself firing magic at will while maintaining the Thunder God Blade through the entire battle.

Determined, Vulcan wielded his blade and went to find more poisonous Gang-shis.

Obtaining sudden enlightenment like high priests was not Vulcan’s style.

Violent and ferocious bastards that would hang out with him was absolutely necessary.

Vulcan had a smile on his face as if he was really happy about something. He walked forward.

In the forest area and the poisonous crater field, he had been firing ranged magic like a machine. Compared to those experiences, Vulcan was enjoying this a lot more.

\*

A month passed.

Vulcan gained four levels, making his current level to be 604.

It was a little slower than how it was in the poisonous crater field. However, the experience points required to level up increased with the level, so Vulcan figured it could not be helped.

There was something else that Vulcan was genuinely dissatisfied with.

Pazizizizik.

Slice...

Slice... slice...

In an instant, poisonous Gang-shis' heads and bodies were separated and fell to the floor.

Vulcan shook his head left and right.

“This is not working at all as training.”

Gang-shis didn't know about doing anything else but the linear attack. It was as if they were machines with stupid systems installed. Watching them, Vulcan sighed.

Vulcan needed to maximize the sensation of being on the edge in a tight battle, and through that sense of urgency as the catalyst, Vulcan was going to increase the training efficiency. That was his plan.

However, because the Gang-shis were charging at him at too predictable pattern, his plan was at the brink of failure.

“They are as stupid as bricks.”

Vulcan tried to kick the fallen head, but before his foot could reach the head, the dead body disappeared through the SYSTEM.

After missing the head with his kick, Vulcan sighed.

Objectively speaking, the Gang-shis were not so weak that the battle should be so one-sided.

Of course, their simple movement was a big drawback, but they had incredible speed, heavy power, and toughness, which were



enough to cover that drawback.

However, they were not enough to overwhelm Vulcan's speed, which was one of his strong points. Their defensive power was also not enough to withstand the Thunder God Blade's overwhelming power.

Moreover, their poison, which could have been the most tricky thing to deal with, was being rendered harmless because of the Blue Dragon's Breath. It could not be helped that these things were making the battle not as intense as Vulcan needed it to be.

Vulcan stood there for a moment and thought about this problem.

As if he decided to do something, he nodded once.

Using the Thunder God's Might and lightning spirit form, he quickly went past the poisonous Gang-shi's area.

He stopped in front of an iron gate that was completely red as if it was plastered in blood.

"I was going to come here a little later, but..."

Vulcan have opened this door and entered this place five days ago.

Even then, the training was not going well by fighting against the poisonous Gang-shis. Back then, he thought it would be better to fight the blood Gang-shis which had higher levels.

However, after noticing blood Gang-shis with level markers that read 720 were roaming around in groups of two or three, Vulcan closed the door.

He figured he should come here after getting used to controlling the Thunder God Blade a little better.

However, after spending five more days at the poisonous Gang-shi's area, his body was itching to do something else that Vulcan could not stand it anymore.

He wanted to say no to doing more grunt work that was no fun.

'I don't know. I'm sure it will work out somehow. If I continue to maintain the Thunder God Blade, it will be definitely enough to handle two or three of those. It would be difficult to hunt continuously, but... It will be possible once I perfect the control so that I can cast and disengage the skill rapidly.'

"Master Beruneru, as usual, I'm going forward with this by believing in your teachings."

He was thinking about that old man with foul personality who figured out before anyone that Vulcan got stronger from facing hardships.

However, Beruneru was also a great teacher that Vulcan trusted, second only to Filder.

Vulcan slowly opened the ominous door that looked like blood would come off from touching it.

It was the start of the round two

## Chapter 70 - Strengthened (2)

---

50.

The level difference between the poisonous and blood Gang-shis were only 50.

However, a huge difference that could not be labeled as 'only' existed between the two kinds.

In addition to the basic attributes that the poisonous Gang-shis had, such as attack power, defensive power, and speed, their simpleton behavior pattern was corrected.

Blood Gang-shis moved like living martial warriors of high caliber, demonstrating precise yet bizarre moves. Watching them made Vulcan not able to help himself but to be shocked.

'Seriously, are these guys really Gang-shis? Why are their movements so fluid?'

The blood Gang-shis were manufactured by submerging the dead bodies of ultra-zenith warriors in specially treated chemicals and blood fluids and then injecting them with ancient witchcraft power.

The amount of effort and cost alone were different from the process of making poisonous Gang-shis.

Back in the days of ancients, these were fearsome existences that even low level enlightened beings were shying away from facing them.

Vulcan had no way of knowing this, hence he only cursed at the substantially increased difficulty.

Tsuwwwaaaeec.

Baboom!

Blood Gang-shi's fist tore through the air and came at Vulcan.

It was incredibly fast that it made Vulcan wonder if the fist was coming at him by warping through the space.

However, Vulcan's speed at operating the Thunder God Blade was a little faster.

Instead of dodging the fist, he just cut off the arm to get over the danger. However, that was not the end.

It demonstrated a move that was absolutely impossible for a living human being.

'This little...'

When swinging a fist or kicking, an ordinary human required muscles on other parts of the body to move, so it was possible to know a step ahead and prepare.

However, the blood Gang-shis, although they moved like real living humans, occasionally attacked using marionette like moves that had no precursor movements, making Vulcan panic.

Vulcan cast magic in a hurry.

Three hellfires were generated in front of Vulcan and blocked the blood Gang-shi's attack path.

Boboboomb!

A hellfire had destructive power that was enough to obliterate a town in the lower dimension. However, it was not enough to stop a blood Gang-shi's kick.

Still, the hellfires were successful in reducing its power.

Using this narrow chance, Vulcan used lightning dragon step to dodge and tried to charge in at the same time. However, Vulcan felt another blood Gang-shi behind him.

Vulcan clicked his tongue and gave up on the chance for the attack. He quickly pulled back. The blood Gang-shi with its arm

chopped off laughed in bizarre voice and looked at Vulcan.

KukgugukKuguk.

It seemed its vocal cord was half broken. It made sounds that were uncomfortable for Vulcan to hear.

Fired up, Vulcan was going to use Ifrit's Fist. However, the blood Gang-shis were half a tempo faster in exuding cursed energy from their fists.

There were two head-sized fists coming at Vulcan.

They were coming at Vulcan in a simple linear path, but Vulcan didn't let his guard down.

It looked simple, but if Vulcan fought it head on because it looked simple, he would not be able to handle the sudden change in movements that could happen at the very end.

Vulcan had to either watch the move to the very end and handle it accordingly against the intent of the opponent or use an overwhelmingly destructive power to wipe away the attacks so all further change in the movement would become useless.

'I used to take the overwhelming approach as my style, but...'

To handle all of these 720 level monsters' attacks with that,

Vulcan was lacking in strength and mana.

Also, even if Vulcan had unlimited mana, he would not have used such a method.

The blood Gang-shis far surpassed ultra-zenith warriors.

They had the moves of real Murim warriors. Fighting these monsters and exchanging strikes against them was too fun for Vulcan to give up.

‘It is making me nervous and have my skin shake, but... fighting is supposed to be like this.’

What he had been doing in the forest area and the crater field were not real battles.

He was like a farmer who was satisfied with the result after diligently working toward the goal. The process was only made of repeated actions that Vulcan grew sick of.

Vulcan felt the satisfaction from rapidly rising experience points and exploit rank. However, the battles fought in the process gave him no excitement or joy, not even a handful of sand worth.

Time was spent like that for a year and a half, and now, Vulcan was facing blood Gang-shis.



The battle against them gave Vulcan the sense of urgency and excitement. Vulcan was experiencing such joy that he could not stand still.

Huuuung.

Before he realized, their cursed energies were right in front of his nose. Vulcan had been glaring at them until the moment. He then swung his blade horizontally.

For a brief moment, the blade carried the power of the Thunder God Blade technique, and the blade was about to shoot down the energy fists. However, through a bizarre movement, the two fists of energies moved down.

Before they could reach Vulcan's thighs, he quickly jumped. Stepping on the cursed energy fist, Vulcan launched himself toward the blood Gang-shis.

Baboom!

The bottom sides of Vulcan's feet felt sore, but because he gathered enough mana there and prepared for the impact, there was no significant damage.

The two blood Gang-shis hesitated for a moment as if they panicked.

Vulcan used the Thunder God Blade and swung diagonally

upward against the one on his left.

It was the bastard from earlier that had its right arm cut off.

Slice...

Thump...

It couldn't defend itself properly with the arm missing.

It awkwardly raised its right arm which was missing the rest below the elbow, but its upper body was cut clean and transformed into experience points.

Kugurguk. Kugurgurgurk.

The other blood Gang-shi on the side poured out continuous attacks, but now that it was alone, it was not able to handle fighting Vulcan.

With countless magic attacks keeping it in check, the remaining blood Gang-shi's movements were being hindered. With Vulcan's swift stabbing motion with the Thunder God Blade technique activated, the Gang-shi's head went off flying.

[Experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

[You fought against two opponents at once who were significantly more powerful than you and defeated them!]

[You achieved an exploit!]

[Your exploits points went up.]

The notification sounds made Vulcan happy.

However, what made Vulcan even happier was realizing that he was gradually developing further.

“Phew...”

He breathed out for a brief moment and put the Heavenly Lightning Blade in the sheath.

He stood there quietly for a while, and then he suddenly drew the blade quickly and swung through the front.

Pazuzuzuzuk.

The Thunder God Blade appeared at an instant on the blade and disappeared in a blink of an eye.

Compared to before, it certainly became more natural. Having seen it, Vulcan smiled big enough to make his teeth visible.

It was not as smooth as the move of masters who trained for several tens of years.

However, the frequency of its use in the battle was increasing gradually. Also, in the battle just now, it was activated and disengaged at speeds that Vulcan was satisfied with.

‘Five months. Including the time spent in the poisonous Gang-shi area, that makes this half a year.’

Vulcan was not able to level up as fast as before.

Compared to the time in the forest area or the crater field, the gap between Vulcan’s true abilities and the indicated level had become substantially narrower.

Unless another great enlightenment came to Vulcan to lead him to achieve a significantly greater height at a rapid pace, the level up from now on was going to be slow. This could not be helped.

However...

‘Right now, I am stronger than my level!’

Vulcan was at a similar height as before. However, if he could say that he was a dull, unmaintained blade that was soaked in peace before, now, he was a sharp blade with fearsome blue edge that was carefully sharpened and polished with effort every day, a blade that could bring out the best in any situation any time.

Through the past half a year, Vulcan properly put what he had in the right orders and arrangements.

“Still, it is not enough.”

Vulcan repeated the process of activating and disengaging the Thunder God Blade and mumbled.

“Still, it is not enough. I could do better.”

He could become a magnificent blade with an even sharper edge that shined brightly.

‘To become level 650... 20 more levels from now...’

This wasn’t just about leveling up.

He had the goal of controlling the Thunder God Blade with even more perfection and using various magic at will at any time.

He didn’t want to suffer the humiliation of retreating after facing the Master Gang-shi to level up some more and challenge again

later.

‘I should end it in one try.’

Before long, Vulcan made the first attack against the three blood Gang-shis in front of him that were blocking his path.

It had been two years since Vulcan came to Act 2.

[Demi-god Vulcan]

[650Lv]

Another half a year went by, and Vulcan finally achieved the level 650.

Through the days, Vulcan became completely used to the control of the Thunder God Blade technique.

Vulcan repeated the motion of stabbing the empty air with the blade.

Against the imaginary enemy, the energy from the Thunder God Blade quickly appeared and disappeared after the moment of impact.

With a satisfied look on his face, Vulcan nodded.

‘I can’t bring out its maximum output, but...’

Vulcan was now able to bring about 2/3 of the maximum output at the critical moment without having to focus so much.

His passive skill rank went up as well. It had been a while since this had happened.

Because Vulcan had been focused so much in magic before this, his weapon mastery was stuck in rank A. However, now the weapon mastery was increased to S rank.

Actually, Vulcan was hoping his combat mastery would also go up from S to SS. However, that didn’t happen.

He was not too disappointed.

Without a big enlightenment, his weapon mastery went up. This alone was worth being happy about.

“It is about time I left this place too.”

Vulcan slowly mumbled and looked at the door in front of him.

It was an ordinary iron door.

However, figure of the dark devil drawn above it was ominous. It was giving Vulcan the creeps.

This was the first time for Vulcan to get his mood spoiled like this from looking at just an engraving. That made Vulcan panic a little.

‘I didn’t even enter the room yet. I shouldn’t get psyched out already.’

Vulcan operated the Thunder God’s Might to the maximum output and shook off the evil aura. Afterwards, he kicked open the door and entered it with confidence.

“Hm.”

It was a large circular room.

On its center, there was the Master Gang-shi that was completely wrapped in iron chains that were exuding holy light.

It barely had its face out, and the rest of the body was restrained.

Surprisingly, the Master Gang-shi’s face was very clean despite being an undead monster.

Its skin was smooth and fair. It was the kind that belonged to the most beautiful people in the world. However, the skin looked cold.



The Master Gang-shi said with voice full of hate.

- I was born in the Nam-gung warrior clan of Anhui. I lived a brilliant life. For the sake of the family's honor, I mastered martial arts by throwing myself wholeheartedly into training, and I spent my days fighting for the sake of powerless commoners. However, I was swept into the trick by that wretched blood priest and now I became a wicked existence...

“What is this runt rambling about?”

This boss monster was giving a lengthy speech, complaining about its circumstances. Watching it, Vulcan tilted his head side to side.

With a serious look on its face, the Master Gang-shi was pouring his guts out in detail the terrible fate it lived through. It felt like watching a stage actor doing a soliloquy.

- ... I curse them. I know they are in eternal flame of hell and suffering, but I still will curse them endlessly. I curse even the Brightest Star of the Sky for having punished me, who is without sin. The gods who were similar existence as them...

Suuuwwwaaack!

Clanck!

“Ah, is he invincible at the moment? What is this?”

Vulcan drew the Thunder God Blade and targetted the top of Master Gang-shi's head. However, he stepped back with an awkward face.

Before it could even reach the Master Gang-shi's body. The attack was blocked by a semi-transparent barrier.

Vulcan massaged his hands that felt numb from the impact. Vulcan had a strange thought.

‘Must not attack it while transforming. While it is reciting its important lines, waiting for it to finish is the right mannerism. Is it something like that?’

Vulcan became a perfect audience and watched the Master Gang-shi's stage performance.

Of course, he didn't forget to scan its abilities.

[Master Gang-shi, Nam-gung Jae-huk]

[770Lv]

‘... It's level is 20 higher than the Commander Tree... Hm.’

Of course, Vulcan was at a greater height than back then. However, it was not a huge difference.

He barely managed to slay the Commander Tree while being aided by the Demi-god's additional attributes that gave him an edge, and the Master Gang-shi was expected to be more powerful than the Commander Tree. Vulcan's body got nervous on its own.

‘Of course, the edge from the Demi-god's additional attributes against undead is not bad in this case either, but...’

Vulcan ran simulations in his head about the battle that was to come very soon, and had countless magic prepared.

- ... and you also have similar stench from them... The existence that imprisoned me... Yours smell is not as thick, but... it is the same as them...

Perhaps it was almost done with what it wanted to say.

The holy chains that were restraining the Gang-shi slowly untied itself and fell to the floor.

It was like a slave getting the shackles off. It was like a prisoner being released from a knife on its throat and finding freedom.

Soon, the Master Gang-shi was freed completely. It looked around itself.

It looked like a nobleman in blue suit with the look of a scion. Looking at it, Vulcan said,

“Oh, is the game finally going to begi...”

Pat!

Kagagak!

“...!”

Before Vulcan had any chance to react, the Master Gang-shi charged into stab Vulcan in the chest.

Vulcan hurridly turned his upper body and dodged it. However, its hand broke through the armor and left a long injury on his body.

At that moment, Vulcan saw its eyes.

It was mixed with hate, murderous intent, and evil. It was completely dark without any white surrounding the iris.

Vulcan felt the chill on his back. He desperately controlled the magic that he prepared earlier.

“Kuaaaaap!”

Pacizizizzik!

Tudododododo!

Several thousands of lightning bolts hindered Master Gang-shi's movements, and a large number of Hellfires and two compressed Ifrit Fists came at it afterwards.

Using that brief moment, Vulcan got out of the range and used the multi-potion that replenished all of his endurance, mana and stamina.

With a tense look on his face, Vulcan looked at the Master Gang-shi standing in middle of the dust clouds.

Gulp.

It looked like was damaged a little. It was scorched here and there.

However, it was hard to call it a significant damage.

There could have been a substantially bigger damage if he went in there with his Thunder God Blade at the same time as the impact from magic attacks. However, he didn't manage to. This was the reason why the damage was not significant.

Vulcan raised his mana and thought,

‘I was going to pour in all of the magic as soon as the battle begins and end it there, but...’

Instead, Vulcan was subjected to the first attack, and a large portion of the prepared magic went to waste as of result.

Vulcan was not happy about the wasted magic, however, it was not like this was putting Vulcan at a disadvantage.

It just meant a lucky chance he was hoping for was now gone.

- Die... You pawn of gods.

The Master Gang-shi approached without any sense of presence like the grim reaper. Facing the Master Gang-shi, Vulcan also raised his fighting spirit in flames.

Nervousness, fear, excitement and joy were all co-existing at that moment in Vulcan.

Matching the Master Gang-shi's attacks, Vulcan swung his blade.

# Chapter 71 - Strengthened (3)

---

Baboom!

“...!”

The destructive sound was so loud that Vulcan was having a hard time believing that it resulted from a clash between his blade and Master Gang-shi's hand.

What was even more incredible was that Master Gang-shi's hand withstood Thunder God Blade. Neither poisonous or blood Gang-shi's showed toughness that overcame the Thunder God Blade.

It was as if Master Gang-shi was trying to tell Vulcan that it was at a whole another caliber.

Pazuzuzu.

Through Vulcan's hand, the lightning went around his entire body and then got dispersed to the ground. However, shock of this magnitude did not deal any damage to Master Gang-shi.

It quickly used the other hand and tried to stab Vulcan.

Pressured by the flow of the battle in Master Gang-shi's favor, Vulcan retreated to a distance.

Vulcan thought it would chase right after him. However, Master Gang-shi quietly stayed where it was.

It raised its right hand edge and brought it to the front of its eyes.

It said as if it was surprised.

- You managed to scratch my body.

“ ... ”

- For that, your reward will be death.

“Such a cliché line!”

Vulcan belittled Master Gang-shi for its line sounding like a typical villain.

However...

Tsuuuwwwaaaac.

In response to Vulcan's words, Master Gang-shi approached



Vulcan at an unbelievable speed.

It was comparable to land-fold technique that the Blue Dragon demonstrated on the west island. Vulcan panicked.

‘What a speed!’

It was the result of Master Gang-shi’s incredible physical specs and Thousand-miles technique it used to use in its days of living. The two resulted in a boost in the effectiveness of the technique, allowing the Master Gang-shi to charge in at a fearsome speed. However, Vulcan had no way of knowing this.

Wheec.

Bababoom!

Master Gang-shi’s hand movements were pure speed and violence.

Its hand attacks were like performing swordsmanship moves with just the hand. It felt like Vulcan could almost mistake the nearby space was disappearing every time he dodged it. It was that violent.

Vulcan’s face looked pale. He couldn’t dare to fight it head on, and he was only busy taking back steps.



- Taste the Emperor Blade Art... of the Great Nam-gung warrior clan...

‘Damn it. That runt has the moment to spare for speeches while attacking.’

Using both magic and blade, Vulcan dulled Master Gang-shi’s attacks as much as possible. Using the lightning dragon step to the maximum, Vulcan dodged the dulled attacks.

Despite that, Vulcan barely dodged them by a hair.

For the first time in Vulcan’s life, he was facing an opponent that overwhelmed him in speed.

‘There were times where I was overwhelmed due to numbers, but... to think I’m getting overwhelmed on-sided like this on a one-to-one battle!’

It was hurting Vulcan’s pride.

His face completely crumpled as if he was being belittled by his sworn enemy. The sense of defeat was making Vulcan overcome with fury.

Vulcan wanted to shove the Thunder God Blade to the Master Gang-shi’s mask-like emotionless face.

However, the situation was gradually turning worse for Vulcan.

While fighting against the blood Gang-shis, Vulcan mastered variety of techniques and fine control of magic. He also mastered instant Thunder God Blade to minimize waste on mana.

Vulcan had utilized all of them, however, little by little, Vulcan was losing here and there.

Actually, the difference in their strengths was not so much that Vulcan should be losing so badly like this.

Quite literally, the difference was only paper thin.

However, unlike the usual, Vulcan was losing from the start, and that led to this situation.

‘It was getting tangled up from the start...’

The magic attacks that Vulcan prepared before the battle, which he prepared to make the fight easier, were wasted. Also, Vulcan became hesitant after seeing Master Gang-shi demonstrating speed that far exceeded his expectation. Finally, Master Gang-shi’s evil aura was filling the surrounding, and it was psychologically bringing down Vulcan.

To Vulcan, whose best abilities were his wild lightning and

explosive flame powers, this fact was becoming a big huddle in the battle. After having exchanged about 300 blows against the Master Gang-shi, Vulcan finally realized his mistake.

Self-hatred rushed toward Vulcan. It was enough to make his body shake. However, the situation was no longer on his side. Like a sand castle that washed away little by little, Vulcan was crumbling slowly.

‘Kuuk... I can’t lose one-sidedly like this. Is there something I can do to turn the tide...’

Vulcan thought hard.

However, perhaps because he was too deep in his thoughts, Vulcan ended up with a long injury on his waist from Master Gang-shi’s attack.

Vulcan’s gaze met with Master Gang-shi’s eyes again. The one thing different about it this time was that the Master Gang-shi broke its emotionless face and was smiling lightly.

Its gaze was that of someone who was looking down at the opponent that was destined to lose.

At that moment, the hot-blooded side inside Vulcan, which was sitting deep inside Vulcan’s consciousness, woke up.

“This sonuva bitch!”

Although the Master Gang-shi was facing a fighting spirit that changed all of sudden, the look on its face seemed it still had a lot to spare.

Vulcan looked infuriated and had lost his mind.

It was something that the Master Gang-shi had seen many times in its past.

Countless warriors that it faced in its past life have done the same just before they lost their lives from being overwhelmed. They charged at it while ignoring everything.

However, fighting warriors who lost their calm was easier than handling a stupid boar.

After finishing them with greater ease than before, it used to clean the blood-soaked blade on their dead bodies.

Nam-gung Jae-hyuk, the Master Gang-shi, was thinking the same was happening at this moment. The smile on its face thickened.

However...

PAZIZIZIZIZIK.

BOOM!

- ...!

Vulcan demonstrated destructive power and speed that was incomparable to before. Master Gang-shi had no choice but to erase the leisurely smile from the face.

Although Vulcan was injured, he was pouring out blade techniques and magic that were significantly more powerful and faster.

Master Gang-shi had panicked look on his face for the first time since the battle begun.

BABOOMBOOMBOOM!

PABUBUBOOMBOOM!

It seemed Vulcan was going to throw everything he had.

Usually, when an opponent acted carelessly like this, bad habits surfaced or the opponent used an inefficient move out of anger. Usually, those lead to making the fight easier.

However, Vulcan's moves were not like that.

He was wild and quick like an injured monster. However, he did not lose precision.

Vulcan was sufficiently utilizing the explosiveness from his fury, and at the same time, Vulcan did not lose the things he have trained for and learned until now. With that, the one-sided battle found balance.

- Kuuuurrrraaaa! Unforgivable! I'll kill you!

- I'll slaughter all children of gods!

Of course, that did not mean Vulcan was now completely overwhelming Master Gang-shi. It merely evened out the difference that was created from Vulcan shriveling during the start of the battle. They were still evenly matched.

Master Gang-shi was superior in close combat.

Vulcan was taking steps back, but that was all. When it came to swordsmanship, Vulcan was definitely lacking in comparison.

However, swordsmanship was not the only thing that Vulcan had. He was capable of firing several tens or hundreds of magic attacks like a storm. They were enough to limit Master Gang-shi's movements.

The battle was tight. It seemed even a slight mistake would be enough to decide the battle.

However, both sides demonstrated peak concentrations. Neither side showed any gaps.

Like that, a thousand strikes... and going over a thousand and five hundred strikes... The drawn out battle continued.

It seemed the two monsters were going to keep this up even after three days and nights.

However, there was no such thing as an endless battle. In the end, the victor was decided.

- To think I would be defeated... Again, against the filthy kin of gods... this...

“Ugh... Ugh... I would love to hear... ugh... about your circumstances.... But... Kuuhuk... I’m busy, so... Phew...”

Vulcan was breathing hard.

His entire body was painted in blood from Master Gang-shi’s attacks.

Vulcan’s armors were also in pieces, so he was practically without any.



Only the Heavenly Lightning Blade, which had indestructible attribute, maintained its original form.

Still, Vulcan's state was better than Master Gang-shi, who was collapsed on the floor with its hands destroyed.

Vulcan calmed his breathing for a while longer and said in a low voice,

“... Now, I'll send you. Although you will be regenerated.”

Vulcan poured in all of his remaining strength in to the Thunder God Blade technique, and it struck down the neck of Nam-gung Jae-Hyuk, the Master Gang-shi, which was now disarmed.

[Your experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

[You defeated a foe that is significantly more powerful than you!]

[You achieved an exploit!]

[Your exploit points went up.]

[Hidden Quest – Eradicate Master Gang-shi, the boss monster of the ancient Gang-shi factory. Cleared!]

[Please select your reward.]

Quite literally, Vulcan won by a hair difference.

Vulcan's mana could have been depleted first or Master Gang-shi's hands, which can be considered its blades, could have been destroyed first.

Fortunately, the goddess of victory raised Vulcan's hand. However, if anything went wrong, the situation could have warranted Vulcan's defeat.

‘If I was not used to instantly casting Thunder God Blade, I would have lost this battle no matter how many bottles of mana potions I chugged.’

Of course, if that happened, Vulcan would have retreated and used Kina Kina.

Vulcan felt proud to have defeated the Master Gang-shi without relying on it.

“Phew... Anyway, it is done. I cleared the first hidden quest in

Act 2!”

Vulcan collapsed on the floor with all of his arms and legs stretched out.

With the tension now gone, the sense of exhaustion rushed at Vulcan. It was enough to make him unable to stand.

However, Vulcan couldn’t ignore the notification window that said he needed to choose a reward.

Vulcan’s eyes were closing on their own, but he forced them open and looked at the list.

Without hesitation, he picked a skill book.

[Legendary Skill – Gang-shi Armor (Master Rank)]

[Level Limit: 500Lv]

Pure strengthening technique that had the blood priest’s foul methods eliminated. You get to have the tough and sturdy body that is unique to Gang-shis. There could be side effects depending on the rank of the skill book.

Significantly boosts the body’s defense and magic resistance.

Poison rank – Stiff body, severe stench, hideous appearance

Blood rank – Severe stench, hideous appearance

Master rank – Smooth skin

\*Has synergy effect if you have Iron-body technique.

It was an obvious choice.

Other rewards were so-so grand armors and weapons.

In comparison to Gang-shi Armor, they couldn't even hold a candle.

Moreover, the description said there will be synergy effect for having Iron-body technique. Vulcan was too curious about it not to choose this.

‘Of course, I would have never chose it if it was Poison or Blood ranks.’

The Master rank had no negative side effects, so it was irrelevant.

As soon as he chose the reward, he obtained the skill. Vulcan realized that his body became substantially sturdier than before.

It felt like his muscles and bones were mixed with liquefied iron. They felt tough and hard.

Feeling the sturdiness, Vulcan smiled, but then he heard a notification.

Tiii ring~

[Your Iron-body technique's mastery went up from A to S.]

‘So it was this. It is not bad.’

After achieving S rank on dodging and SS rank on lightning, Vulcan had not been getting hit as often, so the mastery rank for the Iron-body technique had not been rising easily since.

Now, its rank went up to S in an instant.

Vulcan was in desperate need for its rank to rise because monsters he was fighting nowadays were at higher levels and he was getting hit a lot unlike before.

Satisfied, Vulcan terminated the notification window and rolled on the floor.

Roll roll roll...

It was to go and get the item that was dropped from defeating Master Gang-shi. Vulcan was too lazy to walk over there.

Vulcan had been diligently training for years. This kind of laziness was hard to see from Vulcan under normal circumstances. However, he was extremely tired, so it could not be helped.

However, there was an item in plain sight for Vulcan to see that made even him at his current lazy state to get a grip in a flash.

“This is!”

Vulcan grabbed it and got up immediately.

It was a precious stone with red tint that was about the size of a fist.

It was the very thing that the few successful gamers praised as the greatest beauty in game and many unsuccessful gamers poured out insults to the management and accused them of tricking the probability over.

“Strengthening Stone!”

Vulcan’s voice echoed through the circular stone room.

His voice was filled with surprise and joy.

It was obvious. Vulcan had never seen Strengthening Stone until now.

[Expendable Item – Ancient Strengthening Stone (Legendary Rank)]

\*Long ago, during the ancient times, the sect of blood priest created the stone after painstaking effort. It was created to make powerful murder machines. The stone contains incredible power. It could strengthen various things, but there is a chance of failure.

Things that can be strengthened – Weapons, armor, accessories, summon monsters (non-living type such as undead)

Effect of strengthening: The performance of the subject is increased significantly.

Probability of strengthening: 80% (The item will be destroyed when it fails)

Vulcan gulped.

# Chapter 72 - Hunter

---

Vulcan could no longer feel the pain that he had been feeling until only a moment ago.

It was obvious.

The Strengthening Stone...

Especially the kind with the chance of failure had a mysterious allure that made the user enter the state of pure excitement.

If the chance of strengthening success was 100%, Vulcan probably would not have been as agitated.

Because the return and the risk coexisted, gamers, the players never managed to escape the world of strengthening.

The Strengthening Stone was glowing brilliantly. Vulcan stared at it like he was going to burn a hole through it with his gaze.

There was no need for him to think about which one to use the stone on.

It was an item with great significance to him, although Vulcan had been starting to feel uncertain about this item lately.

Vulcan looked at the blade he held on his right arm. The blade



was exuding a holy light.

‘The Heavenly Lightning Blade...’

It was most certainly a great blade.

Its attack power was 690. For a weapon with level limit of 470, the stat was incredibly high.

The blade had an additional attribute of being indestructible. Moreover, it had options related to lightning, which were sweet like honey to Vulcan.

‘Still, as I increase in level, I’ll feel the limitation of its level.’

In fact, Vulcan felt it a little even now.

A grand rate type level 700 weapon that Vulcan recently obtained had the attack power of 766. It was 76 higher than the Heavenly Lightning Blade, which was incredible.

Of course, the additional attributes on the Heavenly Lightning Blade were far superior, so Vulcan had no intention of changing his weapon to the grand rate blade even after becoming level 700.

However, if Vulcan ever obtained a new blade that was beyond a legendary rate weapon, even the Heavenly Lightning Blade had the high probability of being shunned.

Still, Vulcan did not want to give up Heavenly Lightning Blade. He wanted to keep it until the end of Act 2. He wanted to make the most of it like making nutritious stew out of bones by boiling them.

‘To throw away this blade and use another one... Each and every one of the options are like pearls...’

Quite literally, there was not a single option in this blade that Vulcan would have been okay with discarding. Vulcan was not certain if he could obtain another weapon as good as the Heavenly Lightning Blade even if he hunted for 100 or 200 years from now as if he was doing a slave labor.

Vulcan’s gaze went back and forth between the Heavenly Lightning Blade on his right hand and the Strengthening Stone on his left hand.

‘80% chance of strengthening...’

It was not a bad probability of success.

However, if it failed, it would not have mattered if the probability of success was 80% or 99%. A failure was a failure. The so called probability was like that.

Vulcan looked anxious like a man who stepped into a casino for the first time and betted his entire fortune on a game of baccarat.

He couldn't just not use the stone, and if he was going to use the stone, it had to be this blade. No other items were worthy.

“Phew. It is not the time to act like an indecisive good-for-nothing.”

Vulcan closed his eyes for a moment. He took a deep breath, and brought the Strengthening Stone to the Heavenly Lightning Blade.

Doing so made the Strengthening Stone to exude even stronger light.

A new notification window floated up in front of Vulcan.

[Would you like to use the Strengthening Stone on 'Heavenly Lightning Blade (Legendary rare weapon)'?]

[Warning: If strengthening fails, its 'indestructible' option will not apply.]

‘Uuu... You did not need to mention that to me...’

Having heard the warning, Vulcan got to hesitate again.

However, having come this far, Vulcan could not back down.

Vulcan pressed “Yes” button and closed his eyes again.

‘Please, Jesus, Buddah, Lumitus, please!’

Although Vulcan closed his eyes, he could feel the light filling the entire stone room.

Along with the light, he could hear ‘wooooooong’ sound. With anxious heart, Vulcan waited for the strengthening to complete.

Like that, about five seconds passed.

It was around the moment when Vulcan’s heart felt like it was going to burn to crisp from being anxious. Vulcan could finally hear the sound of notification that he had been wanting to hear so desperately.

Tiiii ring~

[You were successful in strengthening!]

[Please confirm the strengthened item.]

“... Phew.... Phewaa....”

Vulcan sighed in relief.

To exaggerate a little, he was about as nervous as the time when he first ran into a Chimera.

Vulcan opened his eyes big and looked at the state of the strengthened item.

There was a blade that was shining even more brilliantly with holy light. Inside the stone room, it was revealing its graceful self.

[Legendary rare weapon – Strengthened Heavenly Lightning Blade]

[Level Limit: 647Lv]

[Mastery Limit: Lightning mastery rank SS or above]

Attack power: +941

Indestructible

Attack speed: +25%

Movement speed: +10%

Attack power of lightning type skill: +30%

Efficiency of lightning type training: +20%

Required mana reduced by 15% on lightning type skill.

\*A lightning type blade that was said to have been bestowed by a lightning god of ancient legend to a hero who saved the humanity. It significantly amplifies the lightning type skills. The blade's power is now greatly enhanced from being upgraded with the Strengthening Stone.

“This goes beyond the legendary rate... I just don't know what to say.”

Vulcan thought about countless number of items that have gone through him until now, and then he compared them to the blade in front of him.

Of course, there was not a single item that could hold a candle

next to the Strengthened Heavenly Lightning Blade.

‘Maybe all of the items I have ever obtained until now got combined into one, then it might be worth this much...’

Vulcan could not be certain about it.

‘There is one thing I can be sure of now. I won’t have any reason to use other weapons until the end of Act 2.’

Even weapons with 900 level limit could not be this magnificent. Vulcan calmed himself down from the excitement. He picked up the Strengthened Heavenly Lightning Blade and put it away in his sheath.

Now, his business here was done.

It was time for Vulcan to go back to Espo City.

\*

Having exited the hidden dungeon, Vulcan used the return scroll and came back to Espo City.

Vulcan completed the basic maintenance. The first place he visited afterwards was Forwaru’s General Store.

Having arrived at the front of the store, Vulcan observed the exterior of the store.

It was clean and sophisticated looking two-floor building.

It seemed the business was going pretty well. While Vulcan was just watching the place, three people entered the place.

Vulcan was a little hesitant about going inside the store.

‘It seems they are currently open for business. Should I come back later?’

Vulcan didn’t come here for anything special.

He just wanted to say hello for Jake. If Vulcan got to open up a good relation with Forwaru in the process, that was going to be enough. That’s what Vulcan was thinking.

‘Last time I was here, I was hoping to get an investment offer, but...’

Now, Vulcan thought there was no need for it.

Vulcan no longer needed a new weapon until the end of Act 2. As for armors, he had been beating the crap out of so many monsters that he was up to the point of getting necessary items on his own.



Vulcan still had plenty of potions, and if he ran out, it was not going to be a problem.

Vulcan had so much money that he could just purchase them with money.

‘I think I’ll get rich from just selling everything I have in my inventory.’

Honestly, Vulcan was thinking he might make more money than Forwaru who was in the merchant business.

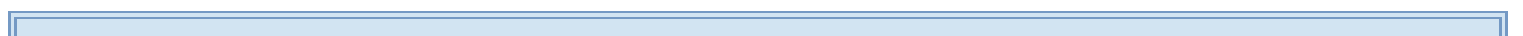
Vulcan stayed outside and watched customers coming and leaving for a while longer. He then slowly entered the building.

‘Still, he is Jake’s master. He will be glad to see me. He wouldn’t be heartless and say come back later when he is not busy.’

Thinking like that, Vulcan was looking around the area. A gigantic physique entered Vulcan’s sight.

His muscles were protruding like warriors from Powell. He was a man with a huge mouth containing shark-like set of teeth that was hard to believe that it belonged to a human being.

Still, his eyes were smiling, so his overall look felt very unbalanced.



[Ancient Predator (Anglerfish) Forwaru]

[882Lv]

‘His level is... incredibly high.’

Because Forwaru was Jake’s master, Vulcan had predisposition to think that Forwaru must have a low level like Jake with a so-so combat potential. However, Vulcan was mistaken.

Of all people Vulcan have met so far, Forwaru was second only to the Blue Dragon.

With a vacant look on his face, Vulcan looked at Forwaru.

“Um?”

Forwaru was about to greet the new costumer that came in.

However, Vulcan just stared at Forwaru for a long time as if he was going to burn a hole through Forwaru with the gaze. Forwaru tilted his head side to side, thinking Vulcan was an odd newbie.

‘Who is that runt?’

That’s what Forwaru was thinking. However, the words that

came out of Forwaru's mouth were polite.

Forwaru said with kind smile,

“Hello. By any chance, do you have something you want to tell me?”

“Ah!”

Forwaru's smile was big and wide, reaching all the way to just below his ears. Looking at his smile, Vulcan got a grip and said,

“How do you do? I was here last time, but... I'm here to tell you how Mr. Jake is doing.”

“Jake...!”

Forwaru was very surprised.

He hardened the expression on his face for a moment, and then he put on a smile. Forwaru said,

“I think this conversation will take a while. Let's go to the guest room.”

\*

“Hm... This definitely is Jake’s.”

Vulcan showed Forwaru an item that Jake used to have. It seemed Forwaru was done with examining and confirming the item. With a smile, Forwaru offered Vulcan a handshake.

“I’ll introduce myself properly. My name is Forwaru. I’m a merchant in Espo City. I used to be Jake’s master when I was in Beloong City. Ah, I’m speaking freely. Is that making you uncomfortable?”

“Not at all. Please speak freely.”

“Haha. It has been a while. Hearing stories about him is making me indulge in nostalgia. Actually, those were the good old days. Nowadays, it is tight to make a living.”

Forwaru brought out three large, thick cigars from his pocket and lit them. He inhaled them all at once. In just a second, all cigars were burned to the root. Forwaru spat the cigars out, and this time, he brought out a bottle of whisky. He finished that in one-shot as well.

Watching Forwaru, Vulcan thought,

‘He likes smokes and drinks. He is indeed Mr. Jake’s master.’

The two chatted for quite a while about Beloong City.

It was Vulcan that talked most of the time.

With Jake as the main focus, Vulcan talked about what happened in Bellong City, and Forwaru responded to the stories. The conversation went on like that.

“Haha. Looks like that runt became pretty big. Well, there wasn’t anyone in Beloong City that could be called a merchant, but...”

“Oh, really? So something like that happened...”

Here and there, in-between Vulcan’s narrative, Forwaru said things to show that he was listening to the stories.

It felt friendly like talking to a middle-aged man next door. Because of this, Vulcan was able to unfold his stories with more ease.

It had been a while since Vulcan got to have an ordinary conversation like this without any other motives.

Vulcan’s daily life was stained in blood, slaughter and battle. Compared to that, this was a luxury that he didn’t get to enjoy often.

However, Vulcan was not feeling at ease at the moment.

For some reason unknown to Vulcan, having conversation with Forwaru was not all that comfortable at this moment.

‘I think he is a good man like Mr. Jake said, but...’

Considering how Forwaru spoke politely when they first met, and considering how he carried on conversations, it seemed Forwaru was certainly a good man.

However, despite all that, Vulcan felt awkwardness here and there. It was making him feel uncomfortable.

Vulcan continued on the conversation smoothly and observed the expression on Forwaru’s face.

It seemed Forwaru was not thinking the same as Vulcan.

The look on Forwaru’s face was without any lies. He seemed to be genuinely enjoying the stories about his pupil in Act 1 because it had been so long since he heard about Jake.

‘Is it that we are just not a very good fit?’

Establishing a good relation between people...

That went beyond the matter of someone being a good or bad person.

When Vulcan received investment offer from Jake for the first time before, Vulcan could feel that Vulcan and Jake were becoming close friends despite having known each other only for short while.

To exaggerate it a little, they got close enough to trust each other with lives.

However, Forwaru and Jake were two completely different people.

Vulcan thought it might be possible to maintain a good relation with Forwaru, but he thought that it might be impossible to establish a deep, close connection with him even after ten years. It was a sad thought.

‘Well, it is not like it is absolutely necessary for me to become super close with him.’

Vulcan was thinking about all sorts of things. Meanwhile, the conversation continued without interruption.

About one hour passed and Vulcan’s stories mostly concluded. It was around that time. Forwaru brought out another bottle of drinks and changed the subject.

“By the way, you are a Player, right?”

“Ah, yes, that’s right.”

“I see... The protective spell has not expired yet, but you placed items like that on the auction site. It would not make sense unless you were a Player. Using a Player’s standard to rate the items... The bow that I bought last time was probably at least a legendary rate, is that right?”

“That’s right. By the way, were you an archer?”

Vulcan could not imagine Forwaru being an archer at all.

Forwaru also shook his head hard to indicate he was absolutely not an archer.

“Haha. Of course not. I bought it just to expand my business. Lately, I have been buying quality weapons before anyone else.”

“Ah, I see. Actually, it seemed there were high demands for quality weapons.”

“Of course. You probably have no idea how much they are sought after among warriors. Players tend to have plenty of equipment, so. Haha.”

That was something Vulcan agreed on.

In particular, Vulcan currently had substantial number of items from the hidden quest area, so he had no choice but to agree with



Forwaru on this point.

“Hm. So...”

Forwaru slightly leaned forward toward Vulcan.

Vulcan thought, here it comes.

‘As I thought. There is no way Jake’s master would send me away without doing any trade.’

Having thought about it, Vulcan realized he got to know this place because of the auction site trade that he did.

Vulcan put up a smile that was appropriate for business and made the first move.

“Does this mean you are going to ask me to sell items if I have quality goods?”

“... Huhhuh... Was I too obvious? A merchant should have thick skin... This is not good.”

“That’s not why. To begin with, the shop employee here told me about it after the auction site trade. Anyway...”

Vulcan brought out seven items from the inventory.

They were all grand rate type items. Of all grand rate items, these were the ones with pretty good options.

“These are not as good as the legendary rate bow that I sold last time, but they are still pretty useful equipment. Are you interested in purchasing them? If you have no need for them, I’m thinking about going to the auction site.”

“Gosh...”

Forwaru made a fake laughter. He looked at Vulcan and said,

“It feels like you are more of a merchant than I am.”

\*

“Well then, I’ll come again.”

“All right. I hope you bring more equipment next time.”

“Haha. If they are something I do not need, I’ll bring them your way.”

With that, Vulcan left the general store.

The well greased door smoothly opened and closed.

At the same time, on Forwaru's face, which was looking at Vulcan, his smile disappeared.

"You handle the customers for the day."

"Yes, I understand."

Forwaru returned to the guest room. He could see the seven items laying on the table.

Forwaru moved his gaze around them for a moment. He slowly moved his hand toward them and picked one up.

It was a heavy, two-handed sword with cool-looking engraving of a dragon.

Forwaru examined the sharp edge of the sword like an experienced examiner, and then he pointed the tip of the sword toward his mouth.

He then opened his mouth big and started to eat it.

Crunch crunch.

Clank clank.

From the tip of the sword and to all the way down the handle, Forwaru swallowed the entire thing.

Forwaru looked satisfied as if he just ate a delicious cookie.

“Phew... As I thought, it takes at least a grand rate item to not cause problems with my body. I don’t think I should just let this be. I can’t stand just being quiet and only accepting trades.”

He had an emotionless look on his face.

However, between that look, there were uncontrolled violent look that leaked out here and there.

Forwaru had become even more violent than his days in Act 1. He mumbled in a low voice.

“When the protective blessing ends, I should go get him.”

## Chapter 73 - Hunter (2)

---

In a quiet room, there was someone who was working with a few dozen papers floating in the air.

He looked at one of the papers and opened his mouth.

“Hm... Another request was made about this man although he is a newbie.”

Moreover, the request was similar to the last one.

It asked about information regarding the newbie Vulcan. It wanted information about his protective blessing's expiration date and current location.

‘After the Chimera maker, now Forwaru from the general store is asking about him. Although this man is quite unique...’

Madorugi, the owner of the Oracle, searched for all information with the keyword ‘Vulcan’ in the database.

There was not much information about him but nevertheless, some information did come up.

Madorugi had investigated about him before on the side when the Chimera maker made the same request.

‘If it was not for that request, I would not even had this much. It is not like there are only a few newbies.’

He leisurely enjoyed a tea and looked at the information about Vulcan.

Madorugi quickly read the information.

The tea was slightly cold. He drank the whole thing at once and quietly said,

“I can understand why they are interested.”

Madorugi gently closed his eyes and organized his thoughts

Vulcan was, despite being a newbie, a very unique runt.

Oracle always monitored people entering and leaving the Espo City, so he was also aware of when Vulcan first came to Act 2.

It had been about two and a half years since Vulcan came to Act 2.

Also, in that short time, he garnered attention of not just one but two dangerous men.

In that short time, although he did not do anything in particular

to get noticed, information about him was kept on being requested. There was only one reason for this.

‘The kind that is even more special than the Demi-gods... He is a Player that made it to Act 2. He must definitely be special.’

According to a few reports from the forest area, Vulcan was a Player, the kind whose physical abilities and mana capacity improved automatically from slaying monsters.

Players were as unique as the ancient beings who were rarely seen nowadays.

Madorugi had gathered all sorts of information about various kind of beings. However, this was the first time even for him to see the information about Players.

It was because there wasn't even a single Player in the Act 1 area that he was at.

‘I've heard that there are quite many of them in Beloong City, but I also heard that there isn't any talented one as if lack of talent is a part of their attributes... Looks like this one must be a mutant. I can definitely understand why these runts are working up their appetites.’

When it came to the Chimera maker, there was no need to explain it since he was a runt who tore apart other people's bodies and performed research. Even in the case of Forwaru the predator,

Madorugi had a rough idea.

The word on the street was that equipment always dropped whenever a Player slayed a monster. This must have been the reason why Forwaru was interested in Vulcan.

‘That poor bastard. No matter how much of a talented mutant you are, it would be difficult for him to escape their grasps alive.’

Madorugi prayed for Vulcan’s safety.

However, pitying him was one thing, and business was business.

Madorugi was intending on diligently executing the request made by Forwaru, who was his customer.

‘I snuck in a surveillance magic when he was here last time, so... There is no problem in locating him.’

Madorugi was not worried at all about being found out.

It would have taken someone as powerful as Blue Wind the Blue Dragon to barely manage to notice it. Madorugi was thinking that there was no way that some newbie would have noticed it.

Madorugi decided to wrap up the case about Vulcan with what he gathered so far and get to the next case.



Also, at that moment, a pretty good idea flashed through his mind.

‘That runt is going to either die or get brainwashed anyway... Maybe I should sell a bit more information?’

Countless residents of Act 2 put themselves through excruciatingly tough situations in order to break through the walls and achieve greater heights.

Of them all, especially among humans, there were those who fell to despair from the limitation of their species and talents. There were many who even resorted to wicked experiments.

‘If I tell them about the Player’s unique constitution? Also, if I spread rumors that I know about Vulcan, that rare Player, his location, and the expiration date for his protective blessing?’

There had to be many who would work up appetite if Madorugi did spread rumors about Vulcan.

‘From top of my head, I can think of Bae Su Jin and Iron Horse... These bastards can’t stand still when it comes to special research materials.’

Also, there were hyenas-like people that swarmed in whenever something of their interest happened and tried to get everything they could scrape up.

He figured he could get substantial information fee from them as well.

‘Um... It will be all right. Vulcan is going to die anyway, and I’m just selling information...’

Actually, the information fee was not important to him.

He just liked gathering information that others didn’t know about.

Also, he enjoyed greater thrill from manipulating people with information and watching many people getting played.

He was like that even when he was at the lower dimension.

He possessed more powerful magic than anyone else, but he never tried to stand out. Instead, after creating the thieves’ guild, he chose to stay in the shadows and steadily watch and enjoy it.

‘Even with the Holy Sword, it was fun watching them running around here and there... I wonder how much fun I’ll be having with this one.’

Madorugi had a shady smile on his face.

Vulcan had about seven and a half years left until his protective blessing expired.

‘After about seven years later, if I spread just a little bit of information about Vulcan, his rarity and worth, I will be able to watch something fun.’

At that moment, a new request came in to the Oracle.

By a coincidence, it was from the one who had been filling Madorugi’s head at the moment. It was from Vulcan.

Still unable to erase the big smile on his face, Madorugi said,

“Hm... Information about hunting grounds... That’s not hard. He is a precious customer. I should hurry and give him the information.”

After that, for his customer, he provided high quality information without a single bit of lie.

\*

“Hm... Fortunately, it seems like the remaining hunting grounds won’t have problems.”

This was the second time for Vulcan to request information from the Oracle. He was impressed by the latest information that he received quickly.

“As I thought, having a lot of money is great. I’ve heard that there are people who don’t even dream about buying information because it is so expensive. Ha. To think that money is this important in a place like this full of people who are on Demi-god levels...”

Vulcan clicked his tongue and shook his head.

He was able to make money easily thanks to the Player’s ability. However, thinking about how other newbies must be living in substantially worse conditions, that made Vulcan feel weird.

‘As I thought, being a Player is the best. You get to choose your profession, and there is item drop too.’

Vulcan was completely unaware that he became the target of many people because of the fact that he was a Player.

Vulcan took a moment to update the map and hunting ground information based on the new information he just received.

Vulcan compared a few hunting grounds, and he decided to go to the place that he was originally intending to go to.

‘If I do, then the money I paid for getting the information would be wasted... Nah... I get to go there now without any sense of doubt. My mind is at ease, so that makes the information worth the money.’

Besides information, Vulcan had no other places to spend the money anyway.

Vulcan opened up his guide book and read the information about 'Lava Field' that he decided to go to.

### [Hunting Ground – Lava Field]

It is a hunting ground with monsters estimated to be around 750 – 760 level. The field is scorched with extreme heat. The monsters are also fire type.

At the center of the hunting ground, there is a volcano that is endlessly generating lava. Also, there are many deep ponds made of lava that has not cooled. Because the area is full of flame and heat, just standing there is helpful in increasing the fire mastery. This hunting ground is recommended.

Unlike past hunting grounds, this one was not a perfect fit for Vulcan.

It was because most of the monsters here had high resistance to flame magic.

However, Vulcan was also highly resistant to fire, so the burden on defense was substantially lower than how it was with the Ancient Gang-shi Factory.

‘There are fewer of the ones who will come at me in groups, and... I can block the monsters’ attacks with flame magic and use the Thunder God Blade for attacks.’

Also, the most important thing above all was that this place was a highly likely place for a hidden quest.

‘Are you certain? Can you swear?’

‘You little runt! When an elder says so, you just need to trust him!’

Beruneru was certain about this place.

Vulcan pushed the envelope a little and pestered Beruneru about it, and as of result, he was able to get a clear answer about how to get to the hidden dungeon in the Lava Field.

‘It is just that, to enter this place, I need a higher level flame magic...’

According to Beruneru, in order to reach the place that was suspected of being the hidden quest area, it required SS rank fire mastery.

Berunaru said it would be difficult just to get near the place with a lower rank. Vulcan remembered his own face getting stiff from

hearing that.

It was a very difficult condition to meet.

However, Vulcan, who had been indiscriminately launching flame magic since arriving at Act 2, was aware.

He was aware that his flame mastery was at the top end of rank S, and with a little bit more time, he was going to be able to make a leap to the SS rank without problems.

‘Actually, I already had the enlightenment at the Cursed Underground Graveyard.’

When Vulcan destroyed Muruola the Death Knight and achieved enlightenment, it was not just about the lightning magic.

Through violent and restless attacks, enlightenment for lightning and fire came at once.

However, because of the ‘Training efficiency during lightning type training + 20%’ option in the Heavenly Lightning Blade, just the lightning mastery was improved to SS rank, and Vulcan had not yet broke the fire mastery’s S rank wall.

It was not that the gap to the SS rank was small.

However, it was not so much that it was going to be difficult to

fill.

‘While I was grinding for the past two and a half years, I increased it a lot. From now on, it is not like I can have explosive level ups. If I roughly set it as the goal before the protective blessing runs out... I can definitely get to the SS rank!’

Vulcan put the guide book back into the inventory. With strong gaze, Vulcan looked up the sky.

Currently, his level was at 650, and the true height that Vulcan considered himself to be at was 750.

The difference between the two was not as substantial as before.

From now on, each level up was going to take an incredibly long time.

It was going to be a different story if Vulcan, by luck, achieved another enlightenment and obtained strength that was beyond his level. However, as he reached greater height, it was obvious that the moment of enlightenment would not come so easily.

Vulcan was not expecting anything big. Instead, he decided to increase level with patience.

‘From now on... I should think of it as a long distance marathon. I need to be determined.’



Vulcan stopped by at the store that was owned by an Act 2 Manager. He bought lots of food as if he was just sweeping the counter, and then he shoved them into the inventory.

It was not the amount for one to two years like he had been getting in the past.

It was worth 30 years of food for one person. It was a lot.

Besides food, Vulcan completed other preparations one by one.

Finally, when Vulcan was ready to leave Espo City, he said this toward himself,

‘This is the most important thing. Preparing against the Chimeras... I need to make sure of it.’

Chimera maker was the one that Vulcan got tangled up with bad blood as soon as he got to Act 2.

This man was most certainly going to make a move as soon as Vulcan’s protective blessing expired.

Vulcan was going to need to get in to the habit of always being cautious when the protective blessing expires so that he does not fall prey to that bastard’s schemes.

‘Even when I’m in middle of hunting. Tsk. I wish another dungeon with one-person limit showed up.’

If this hidden quest was limited to one person, Vulcan was planning on just settling there and level up until monster regeneration stopped completely, until the Chimera maker, who was after Vulcan, died of being infuriated from not being able to get to Vulcan.

‘For now... The first priority is getting to the SS rank on the fire mastery.’

Having thought this far, instead of agonizing over this, he walked quickly.

Vulcan only had seven and a half years left. To achieve his goal in that short period of time, he could not afford to waste even a little bit of time.

\*

Having arrived at the hunting ground, he cut down the monsters literally like a mad man.

The Lava Field was different from the Poison Crater Field. There were other people coming by in occasion. Human and a few other beings got to watch Vulcan fight.

Vulcan was working extremely hard. He was training like there

was no tomorrow, enough to make veterans with 100 years or longer experience in Act 2 to lose their fighting spirit.

‘How could he continue such intense training like that?’

‘Watching him made me realize the fault in my ways. I need to work even harder.’

‘By the way, how could a newbie have such power... Is he a Demi-god? Or is he an ancient?’

Those who watched Vulcan’s training was getting sick of its intensity.

However, to Vulcan, the training was something he had an obvious reason to do.

Vulcan did not have much time left for training like this wholeheartedly without having to worry about Chimeras’ ambush.

Whenever he got tired and exhausted, Vulcan thought about the shock and terror he felt at the forest area.

Just thinking about the sense of danger from that moment felt like it was giving Vulcan the strength he didn’t even have.

Like that, every day, Vulcan had fierce battle with monsters, a

fierce battle against himself.

Like that, seven years passed.

[Demi-god Vulcan]

[735Lv(+ 30)]

Vulcan’s level increased by 85. It was now at 735.

## Chapter 74 - Hunter (3)

---

“What?”

Madorugi, the owner of the Oracle, mumbled.

His mouth was slightly open as if he was having a hard time believing it.

He focused mana in secret and closely examined the subject he had been monitoring.

However, he was not mistaken.

This was completely unexpected. Madorugi bit his lower lips.

‘He is just about to take off the newbie sticker... Yet he is at the Lava Field?’

Also, he wasn’t just there.

He was demonstrating powerful moves like true warriors who had sharpened themselves in Act 2.

The Hell Flame Lazards were something most people didn’t even dare to fight. However, Vulcan was handling them with ease. Madorugi could not help but to be impressed.

Madorugi vacantly glared at the battle for a moment. He then suddenly came to his senses.

After that, he retrieved his mana and terminated the surveillance mode.

‘Vulcan... How could he have become so strong so quickly? No... Was he always this strong?’

Madorugi had the surveillance magic cast on Vulcan a long time ago, but this was the first time for him to actually confirm where Vulcan was and check what Vulcan was up to.

Vulcan was still just a newbie.

Madorugi was thinking it was obvious that there were only a few things a newbie could do and a few places to go to in just ten years. Because of this, Madorugi was thinking there was no need for him to check up on what Vulcan was up to.

Madorugi had many other things to take care of, so he had forgotten about Vulcan for a long while. He only checked up on Vulcan because it was almost time for Vulcan’s protective blessing to expire.

However, Vulcan was far exceeding Madorugi’s expectations. This was making his head complicated.

‘Um... I was going to sell the information to practically anyone, even some wishy-washy nobodies...’

Madorugi was thinking about the ones that barely managed to overcome the wall of Act 1, the bottom feeders that would try anything and grab on to straws out of desperation, the kind that easily risked their lives to achieve greater heights. Madorugi thought that releasing information on such people would lead to more entertaining consequences. However...

‘If Vulcan is at the Lava Field, those runts would not dare to go near.’

Madorugi was disappointed, but this could not be helped.

However, even if those ones were excluded now, there were plenty of others that were extremely interested in the Player’s body.

Madorugi started to sell information about Vulcan in secret. He sold them to ones who were powerful enough to neutralize Vulcan and were not hesitant to try anything to achieve greater heights.

After he roughly finished the work on Vulcan’s case, he sipped on the tea and smiled.

‘I think I’ll get a fun hobby after half a year.’

There were so many hunters. It was not certain who would get

the prey.

Madorugi was excited in anticipation.

\*

It was an organism that exuded flame as if it was just breathing. The flame was hotter than the flame from Hell.

Including its tail, its body span was over 33 ft in length. It was a giant.

Its entire body was red like flame. A giant lizard opened its mouth toward Vulcan.

[Flame Lizard of the Fallen Hell]

Kuuuaaaaa.

Extremely hot flame was coming out of its mouth. It made Vulcan wonder if the dragon's breath was like this.

Becoming of its large mouth, the flame was spread to a pretty large range.



However, Vulcan transformed to the lightning spirit, used the lightning dragon step and dodged it at an incredible speed. He got out of the flame's range.

After that, when the Hell Flame Lizard was firing its breath at the wrong direction, Vulcan swung the Heavenly Lightning Blade.

Slash.

Kuuuurwuuuuurrrr.

The lizard lost one of its rear legs.

Due to the pain, it was infuriated. The lizard shot fire breath in all direction, but it was not quick enough to catch up to Vulcan's rapid movement.

Slice.

Puuuwwhaaak.

Now, even a part of its neck was cut by the Thunder God Blade.

The wound was deep enough that the fire breath, which was pouring out of the lizard with exhilarating intensity, was leaking through the wound.

Kuuuuwueuuuur.

Due to being infuriated, the Flame Lizard lost about half of its calm.

However, it new that it would die if this continued.

It had been attacking using the fire breath alone. Now, the runt changed its offensive strategy.

Toooooong.

It pursed its mouth as if it was collecting its saliva. It spat something out.

The attack flew toward Vulcan at a significantly faster speed.

It was a lump of lava.

It was not as powerful as the fire breath. However, if it hit, it was going to be enough to instantly melt that fly like runt.

That's what the lizard was thinking. The Hell Flame Lizard continued to shoot lava lumps at Vulcan.

However, the situation was flowing in the direction that was completely different from what the lizard was thinking.

Wooooong.

Magic power was raised.

Vulcan's left fist was swung with great force, and it made a powerful impact against the lava that was shot toward Vulcan. Vulcan invested quite a large amount of mana into the Ifrit's Fist, and it was now compressed and coating his left fist.

It was a head on collision of two very powerful flame techniques. The area shook wildly as if several thousand dynamites exploded.

Boom!

Kwaboom!

The flames splashed all over the place like how water would when a water balloon was popped in midair by punching it.

Most of the splash of flames didn't hit Vulcan. However, some of the debris were coming toward Vulcan's body.

Still, they could not deal any damage to Vulcan.

The little leftovers of the flames barely scratched Vulcan's surface and then fell down powerlessly.

‘My fire mastery would be a waste if I got wounded from mere debris from flame magic attack.’

Vulcan’s various flame magic’s damage increased as his understanding of the flame magic increased. Just like that, his resistance to flame magic was also increased by a large margin.

Unless he was hit directly by the fire breath from earlier, it could be said that there was no way for Vulcan to get seriously injured from flame magic.

‘Of course... That runt is also highly resistant to flame magic.’

Vulcan actually panicked time to time when he came to the Lava Field for the first time.

With ordinary flame magic, let alone keeping the monsters in check, even just drawing their attention was not possible with such magic.

However, Vulcan’s specialty was not limited to just flame magic.

Boom!

Kwaboom!

Vulcan calmly destroyed all of the Lava Lumps launched at him.

At an instant, Vulcan's body became blurry, and he instantly moved to just below the lizard's chin.

It was a quick movement that he could demonstrate only after using the Thunder God's Might, lightning spirit form, and the lightning dragon step to the maximum.

Vulcan disengaged the spirit form. From his blade, the power of the Thunder God Blade was pouring out.

Slice.

Kuuuwwaaang.

And then...

[Your experience points went up.]

[Level Up!]

[You defeated an opponent that is stronger than you!]

[You achieved an exploit.]

[Your exploit rank went up.]

---

Vulcan was not able to cut off its head last time. He now managed to cut off its head clean.

Vulcan used his sleeve to wipe off the sweat from his forehead. Vulcan then quietly mumbled,

“Phew. Instead of using flame magic to keep on guard, I think I should just use blade techniques.”

He was praising himself. However, he was more confident than before, so he was not thinking he was being too boastful.

Instead, he thought such confident behavior was more becoming of lightning and flame type. Nowadays, as if it was a requirement for his pride, Vulcan had been saying things like that often lately.

“Let’s see... My level is now... 736. Phew... It sure is rising slowly.”

He had been hunting for over seven years, yet he only raised 86 levels. Comparing to his days in Act 1 or the forest area in Act 2, this was painfully slow. It was making Vulcan sigh.

However, he knew this was going to happen.

To let out his frustration, he kicked a rock that was rolling around on the ground. He was about to go to a safe place so he

could examine his internals.

However, there were a few gazes following along with Vulcan's movements.

“ ... ”

Vulcan had an uncomfortable look on his face. He then looked at the ones who were staring at him before leaving the scene with even greater speed.

Soon, Vulcan arrived at a place that had nobody around.

Vulcan's head was filled with the people who were watching his battle just now.

‘Somehow... they are making me feel uncomfortable.’

Ever since Vulcan started hunting at the Lava Field, there were occasionally people who watched him fight.

It was because there were only a handful of people with newbie stickers who came to Lava Field to train.

Moreover, one of the spectators once asked Vulcan if he was a Demi-god who was keeping the identity secret. So, it was not strange that there were people who were taking interest in him.

However...

‘Their gazes didn’t look like they were merely curious...’

Vulcan was feeling leery. He thought about the look on their eyes.

They did look impressed, however, in the midst of that, there were strange sensation mixed within that Vulcan could not quite figure out.

That was constantly bothering Vulcan.

“Ugh! I don’t know! Let’s just focus for now!”

Vulcan decided to forget about it for now.

Examining his internal was important, enough to set aside everything for now.

It was not something that could be done easily by thinking about something else. Also, it was not a trivial matter that Vulcan should do it while being distracted with something else.

‘Also... I think I really can see the finish line this time.’

Fire mastery...



It was still at the S rank. It was making Vulcan feel anxious.

However, Vulcan instinctively could tell that it was not long before he was going to break through that wall.

He could not explain it logically. However, Vulcan strongly felt that he would be able to overcome this wall before the protective blessing expired.

‘That’s why I need to focus. It is so that my sense of certainty becomes the reality.’

It did not take long before Vulcan could get rid of distractions from weirdos and focus.

Before long, Vulcan entered deep into the world of his own.

\*

“Fuck, does that make sense to you?”

“... It does not make any sense. No, it does make sense.”

“How does it make sense?”

“If he is a Demi-god who inherited thick blood of a powerful god

rivaling the power of Powell, then he could be strong even as a newbie, enough to slap around most of Act 2 residents.”

Having heard the explanation, the horse-faced man had a look of disbelief.

After that, he shouted out of extreme frustration,

“What a load of bullcrap! You said that runt is a Player!”

“I just entertained some ideas for fun. My apologies.”

“This fucker. This is not the time to joke around.”

“Instead of being infuriated, won’t it be better to relax and joke around?”

Having heard what the one-eyed man said, the horse-faced man shook his head hard.

Of the ones in [Bae Su Jin](#)’s group, over half of them had gone insane from the experiments. However, this one was one of the ones that had the mind intact.

It seemed the magic experiment that he conducted on himself had a negative side effect and damaged him mentally.

[TL: Bae Su Jin is a Korean term that describes the military tactic of setting up the formation with the river or lake behind your own

allies, making it impossible for the allies to fall back should there be an enemy attack. Because it is impossible to run away by turning back, the soldiers have no choice to fight the enemies. It is mentioned to describe a situation where people will definitely not back down because they are so determined, even if it means losing their lives.]

‘Actually, the fact that he entered Bae Su Jin means he is not normal. Neither of us are normal.’

The horse-faced man sighed and continued.

“... Anyway, I don’t think our initial plan will work. To swipe off the flies that may get involved, we need at least ten people to guaranty safety.”

“I really think it would be hard to catch him alive with just the five of us. I understand.”

The one-eyed man quietly listened to the horse-faced man. The horse-faced man quietly closed his eyes.

They were members of Bae Su Jin, an organization of human mages.

The people who were at the brink of going insane, from being stranded at where they were due to the limitation of their species and talent, knocked on this organization’s door as a last resort.

These were the people who were not confident about raising their heights using proper methods, so the organization have done countless extreme, bizarre and unethical experiments. It was a shady and immoral organization.

The only thing different about them from the Chimera maker was their experiment methods. Their behaviors were similar. They were bad people just like Chimera maker.

They came to the Lava Field because of the information about a Player that they obtained from the Oracle.

‘A Player? Those runts who get treasures just from slaying monsters and grow stronger automatically without training? I thought there weren’t any in Act 2?’

‘What? There is one? On top of that, this one is a mutant? Get him! You need to get him no matter what the cost!’

The leader of the Bae Su Jin was very excited.

Also, the members of the group were even more excited.

The sense of excitement and joy swept through them just like how the Chimera maker reacted when he first discovered Vulcan. They immediately made the plan to capture this Player alive.

Like that, the horse-faced man and the one-eyed man came to Lava Field a day ago.

It was to learn more about their target in detail and capture him alive perfectly.

Actually, they did not think Vulcan was actually hunting while being here.

‘At most, I thought he was here to just provide support. I figured he would be doing chores for other powerful warriors he met in Act 2...’

They had no way to think otherwise.

The Lava Field was among the high difficulty hunting grounds, even in this place where the best and the greatest of each dimensions were gathered.

It was definitely not a place where a newbie could train alone.

However, having observed Vulcan’s battle for a day, they learned one thing. It was the fact that Vulcan could not be assessed in common sense terms. They learned that Vulcan was an extremely powerful mage swordsman.

He had incredibly high level flame magic and swordsmanship.

Also, Vulcan possessed lightning magic that far exceeded even themselves.

‘He is definitely... not below us... No. He is stronger than me!’

The horse-faced man was thinking about the power of the Thunder God Blade that Vulcan just demonstrated. The horse-face man gulped.

The task just got a lot more complicated than they imagined.

## Chapter 75 - Hunter (4)

---

Of course, it was not like an organization called Bae Su Jin, which was quite a large organization, could not handle Vulcan, who was alone.

With five of them presently there at the Lava Field, it was going to be possible to capture Vulcan alive without suffering too much damage.

However, there was no guarantee that the Bae Su Jin group was the only one targeting Vulcan.

There was a possibility that something unexpected could happen while they were trying to capture Vulcan.

‘Most would just give up because they would not want to get tangled up with us. However... We can’t say with certainty that there aren’t any other dumbasses out there that are aiming for the narrow chance.’

Some people were frustrated and exhausted after several hundred years of stagnant growth. There were runts like that who were willing to risk their lives to find a break through.

If the information about Vulcan had spread to such runts as well, the situation could be beyond just being annoying. It could get serious.

Also, the factor that made the overall variability in risk bigger was Vulcan's strength.

If Vulcan caused a commotion by exuding incredible power while the members of Bae Su Jin fought off the runts trying to butt in to capturing Vulcan, the chance of failure could increase.

'We cannot let that happen. Vulcan is more special than Demigods, and he is the only research material. We cannot lose him.'

The horse-faced man was one of the people who had high hopes for this research.

He imagined researching Vulcan while putting heads together with his fellow Bae Su Jin mages.

He thought about the research miraculously completing successfully and how he would be after achieving the breakthrough using the research result. He was so excited from just thinking about it that he could not stand still.

'Phew... For now, I should stay calm.'

The horse-faced man took a deep breath and calmed himself. He then waited for Vulcan while fighting a suitable monster that he could handle.

There was still a bit of time left before Vulcan's protective blessing expired.



Now was not the time for them to step in out of impatience.

\*

In hiding, there was a Chimera observing the people at the Lava Field.

The old man had been looking around the area using the view that the Chimera was providing him. The old man completely crumpled his face.

“What the? Why are those runts all glaring only at Vulcan?”

There were two men who kept on glancing at Vulcan, the prey that the old man was targeting.

They were slaying monsters once in a while as if they were not very interested in Vulcan. However, having observed their behavior for a long time through the screen, the old man could tell that their behavior was definitely awkward.

It felt like they were watching Vulcan just like how the Chimera maker was.

The old man started to worry about one thing and then crumpled his face even more.

‘By any chance... Are those fuckers also trying to get that runt?’

There was no other way to explain their behavior.

Of course, it was rare to see a newbie slicing and dicing Hell Flame Lizards at the Lava Field, so people could be interested in watching Vulcan.

However, they were watching him just how like the Chimera maker was. They were also trying to keep track of where Vulcan was. This could only mean that they had an ulterior motive.

The old man held his forehead with an exaggerated motion and complained out loud,

“Ugh. Shit. How come anything I do always don’t go smoothly? Uuuuuuaaaaa!”

The old men felt that information must have leaked from somewhere.

He rolled around the laboratory’s floor and screamed in beastly roar.

Kiiiiiii.....

Kiiiiiaaaaaa.

Watching the Chimera maker acting that way, a maid Chimera did not know what to do.

To console its owner, the made Chimera approached him slowly.

Puuuk.

Kiiiiiaaaaaa.

However, the old man had a bad temper. Its head flew off by the fist that the old man swung, and meat scraps got splashed all over the area.

The old man stood up while wearing the aftermath of a fountain of blood.

The old man calmed his harsh breathing and fixed his violent face back to normal. The old man said,

“Um... Seeing blood makes me calm down a little. Good. Haha.”

Using his long tongue, he lightly licked the blood on his face. He then focused on the screen again.

Vulcan was gone for a moment, and now he was back. He was chopping down monsters.

The old man's inside felt frustrating again.

‘Kuuuuk... He is getting stronger too fast, a lot faster than I thought. This is the first time for me to feel like the ten year protective blessing period is so long. If it was 20 years... I don't even want to think about it. Uu.’

When Chimera maker first saw Vulcan, Vulcan was the runt who had a tough time fighting even the Commander Tree.

However, now, Vulcan was fighting against the Fire Lizard of Fallen Hell comfortably when this monster was around the same level as the Commander Tree.

Vulcan's movements were significantly faster than before. His body was tougher, and his mana capacity was definitely larger.

Thinking about the difficulty in capturing Vulcan alive made the Chimera maker sigh. However, when he thought about the fact that the prey that he had his eyes on was far more interesting than he initially believed, that was making him feel great.

‘I gotta catch him... Those other runts... I don't know what they had been doing or where there came from, but they are pretty powerful. I think I'll need to put in reinforcements.’

Currently, the Chimera maker sent five Chimeras to capture Vulcan alive.

It was a number that he decided based on Vulcan's strength. Back then, he assessed that Vulcan's strength was similar to the Commander Tree.

However, Vulcan had become significantly more powerful. Also, considering that there were other runts that seemed like they were after Vulcan, it felt like five Chimeras were not going to be enough.

‘I think I’ll have to send ten more Chimeras... Kuk... I think that’s overexerting a little, but...’

Still, it could not be helped.

When it came to all other kinds of beings, Chimera maker already had studied them all at least once. In this situation, he could not allow losing the Player that appeared for the first time in Act 2.

‘I wish the time passed faster.’

The old man chewed on the cookies while making loud chewing sounds. While chewing on the cookies like that, he waited for the day to come.

\*

The time passed and passed some more. Before long, almost six months had gone by.

The protective blessing on Vulcan was on its way to expiring.

If it was Vulcan from before, he would have realized the dire situation and made iron-clad preparations against all dangers and threats to come. However, he was different now.

With greater intensity and urgency, he was slaughtering Hell Fire Lizards.

He was swinging sword while letting about half of his mind go berserk. However, his body became used to the movements. Demonstrating natural movements, Vulcan was carrying out the battle without making any mistakes.

It had been seven and a half years since Vulcan started hunting at the Lava Field. In that duration, he slaughtered countless number of Hell Fire Lizards.

It meant that Vulcan had reached a height where he simply could not make a mistake even if he wanted.

Kuuuuurrrrrrk.

Kuuuung.

Another lizard disappeared after becoming Vulcan's experience points.

Vulcan instinctively picked up the item. Without rest, he charged toward another prey, and then his battle continued, after another, and after another.

The horse-faced man was watching Vulcan from the far. As if he could not understand Vulcan, he mumbled,

“That runt, why is he acting like that all of sudden?”

“I am not sure. Should I go ask him?”

“Shut up. You are no fun.”

“Yes, but I really don’t know why he is acting like that.”

“I’m the retard for trying to have a conversation with you.”

The horse-faced man shook his head left and right.

He kept silent for a moment, and then he tossed a question at the one eyed man.

“When is the main force going to arrive?”

“In about... two hours... We still have another two to three days before Vulcan’s protective blessing expires, so there is no worry

about being late.”

“I see. All right.”

The horse-faced man quietly mumbled as he watched Vulcan running amok like a madman.

“It will be good for us if he exhausts himself like that whole day. Exhaust yourself some more.”

\*

As if Vulcan heard what the horse-faced man said, Vulcan hunted monsters without taking any break.

Wrapping himself in flame magic, he just toughed out the usual flame attacks with his body, and then he used the Thunder God Blade to carry out a more actively offensive combat.

Instead of thinking that he was a mage swordsman, some people may have thought that he was a berserker instead. Vulcan’s current combat tactic was that violent and powerful.

There was one reason why this became possible.

His fire mastery had progressed further.



His fire magic was blocked for a long time at the end of the S rank.

Vulcan was not just knocking on its wall now. He was at the brink of destroying that wall.

Toooong.

Toooong.

A Hell Fire Lizard repeatedly shot lava lumps at Vulcan as if it was spitting out phlegm.

However, Vulcan's response to it was very simple.

Boom.

Paboom.

It was as if he was swapping flies. Vulcan swung his palm, which was coated with Ifrit's Fist, and swapped away the lava lumps.

The lumps that were bounced away by his palm flew off in several directions and destroyed the surroundings.

Kuwakuwakuwakuwang!

The lava lumps were definitely not weak attacks. However, the fact was that Vulcan was now able to defend against them with more ease than before.

It was an example that showed Vulcan's fire magic had reached a greater height.

Vulcan was able to even fight two Hell Fire Lizards at once.

One continuously shot lava lumps at him, and the other one shot fire breath to pressure Vulcan.

It seemed this was not easy for Vulcan to handle. He used lightning dragon step, but he was gradually getting cornered.

However...

'All right. It is finally over!'

The cooling time for the Super Heated Inferno, which he used two hours ago, was finally over. Now, the table was turned.

Kuuurururururur.

The flames of Hell poured out below Vulcan's feet.

The Hell Fire Lizards were highly resistant to fire magic.

However, even these lizards were feeling sharp pain from the heat rising from the ground.

Of course, it was not enough to deal serious damage to the lizards because their resistance to fire was at the peak levels.

However, the Super Heated Inferno's best features were not limited to just being able to deal damage over time.

Whooosh...

Vulcan transformed to the fire spirit and instantaneously moved to the Hell Fire Dragon's neck.

After that, he disengaged the spirit form.

Carrying concentrated power of Vulcan's magic and Demi-god's power, the Thunder God Blade was swung toward the back of its neck.

Slash.

Kuguoooong.

Its neck was cut clean. It was clean enough to make individual blood veins to be visible on the cut surface.

Around the time the lizard's head collided with the ground and made a destructive noise, Vulcan already had transformed himself to a spirit to take the remaining lizard's life.

Vulcan suddenly disappeared. The Hell Fire Lizard looked around the area to locate Vulcan.

However, the lizard did not get to find Vulcan.

Puuuwaaaaaak.

Kuuuuwwaaaak.

Between its four legs, starting from its stomach, the Thunder God Blade pierced the lizard, and the blade grew its size.

After that, it cut through the lizard from the stomach to the head.

Before the lizard's gigantic body could crush himself, Vulcan used the lightning dragon step and quickly got out of the way.

Kuuuuung.

The Hell Fire Lizard collapsed to the floor. Its corpse looked grotesque.

The corpse slowly faded, and a notification sound could be heard through Vulcan’s SYSTEM.

[Your experience points went up.]

[Level Up!]

[You defeated two opponents at once that are stronger than you!]

[You achieved an exploit.]

[Your exploit rank went up.]

[Demi-god Vulcan]

[740Lv (+ 30)]

Vulcan was now at level 740.

If it was like before, Vulcan would have gone to a safer place and started to examine his internals. However, Vulcan did not do that this time.

Little by little, his fire magic was developing.

At the moment, to achieve new height, he just needed a little bit more growth.

Also, his stats were increased on top of that from the level up.

The situation was like pouring one more bucket of water on a dam that was already withstanding incredible amount of water. However, the result exceeded Vulcan's expectations.

The dam slowly started to develop cracks. It started to develop holes here and there. The water pouring out through the holes created even bigger cracks.

Eventually, the huge dam was finally destroyed completely.

[Your fire mastery rank was increased from S to SS.]

‘I finally achieved SS rank on fire mastery!’

“Hahahahahahahahaha!”

Vulcan experienced the moment of intense joy. He broke in to laughter in a loud voice.

It was an exhilarating, refreshing laughter.

Few people around the area who were training turned their heads and looked at Vulcan. They were shocked.

His entire body was engulfed in flame.

He looked like the god of flame. In his forehead, there was the mark of the protective blessing exuding brilliant light.

Sul Young-hoo, a man who had been focusing only on swordsmanship for the past 1500 years, said with defeated look on his face.

“Sooonaba beech. Looking at a raw talent like that seriously spoiled my mood. Kaaaak. Tuuut.”

He spat once and swung the sword as if he was letting his anger out. He then left the Lava Field.

Others followed suit.

They suddenly witnessed superior talent, and that made them feel defeated.

They could not focus on training anymore.

They each destroyed surroundings at will, cursed at the situation, and left the area.

Like that, people in the Lava Field left one after the other. Meanwhile, Vulcan slowly calmed the power of flame.

Still in the state of excitement, Vulcan tilted up the tip of his mouth.

‘I am so glad. I was worried what I would do if I don’t get to SS rank before the protective blessing ended. It was close, but I made it.’

Vulcan closely examined his new height.

Judging from human standard, he was certain that he was at low 800 level.

‘I have the boost from the Blue Dragon’s Breath, so I guess I can consider myself as the early to mid 800 level. Well, although the Blue Dragon’s Breath feels more like a spec popcorn than increasing the height.’

Overjoyed, Vulcan nodded and looked around.

About six people left the area, and the two men who could be seen in this area often since six month ago were still here. They were fighting monsters.

‘Hm... I thought the rest would also continue to train for a long



time. Well, this is better for me.'

Vulcan took a mana potion and waited for the cooling time for the Super Heated Inferno to pass.

It was because he absolutely needed the Super Heated Inferno to go to the hidden quest area.

Vulcan found a suitable place and examined his internals. When he realized the time was up, he got right up from where he was sitting.

'The largest crater in the Lava Field... That's the place.'

Vulcan was at his tip top condition. He leisurely walked to the front of the crater.

Bubble bubble...

He looked around the crater. Instead of water, the crater was filled with incredible flame and lava.

Size wise, it was not a crater. It could be called a small lake.

Vulcan was not sure what was molten here. However, it was exuding heat that was significantly hotter than the lava that he saw in lower dimensions.

‘Against heat like this, it would have been obviously impossible with S rank fire mastery.’

“Phew...”

Vulcan took a deep breath and exhaled. He then cast magic that increased flame resistance to his entire body.

He left just enough mana to cast the Super Heated Inferno, and then he drank another bottle of potion.

Without hesitation, Vulcan dove into the crater.

Splash.

Cheeeeeeeiiiik.

Lava splashed up high and burned the field around it.

The horse-faced man had been watching it live all this time. Dumbfounded, he mumbled,

“... W... What the? That runt?”

## Chapter 76 - Hunter (5)

---

The two men quickly killed the Hell Fire Lizard and ran toward the crater in a hurry.

Bubble bubble...

They could immediately tell the incredible heat coming from the crater.

The horse-faced man gulped and said to the one-eyed man,

“Hey, you are good at using cold magic, right?”

“Yes, why?”

“In that case, try going in there by wrapping yourself in it.”

“Are you insane? I’m not that good.”

“Ah, how do you know without even trying!”

“Are you going to take the responsibility if I died trying? Also, it is absolutely not possible at my level of mastery. My real specialty is wind magic.”

The one-eyed man actively protested. The horse-faced man

crumpled his face.

Afterwards, he looked at the crater and shook his head.

‘No, to go in there, you need to be specializing in flame magic or do the opposite by having someone specializing in water magic to neutralize the heat on the surrounding and enter...’

The horse-faced man’s specialty was lightning magic just like Vulcan.

He was also completely lacking in the abilities to enter the crater.

“Ugh. Why did that runt jump in there? What’s there to gain? By any chance, was he aware that we are targeting him?”

“I am not sure... Still, if we wait here, he will come out eventually, won’t he? If it looks like he is not going to come out... The main force will arrive soon, so we can send them instead then.”

“You dumbass, their skills are at even lower heights than me.”

“Won’t there two or three who specialize in flame or water?”

“There are, but... that just makes only two or three. With just them, honestly...”

The horse-faced man swallowed the rest of the sentence.

He did not want to say it out loud that their force could be defeated by a newbie.

It was pissing him off. He kicked the ground hard.

Bam!

A gigantic piece of land, a huge piece that looked like even the strongest man in the world would have had a hard time lifting, flew away as if it was just a small pebble.

Still, the horse-faced man could not quench his anger.

Unbelievable situations were happening one after the other. They had made his patience reach its bottom.

‘Seriously. He was already unbelievably strong to begin with, but he became even stronger?’

The horse-faced man pressed down hard on his forehead where he was feeling serious headache. He thought about what just happened.

Vulcan defeated two Hell Fire Lizards and stood up proudly.

After a moment, he exuded flashy fireworks from his entire body and laughed relentlessly like nothing could get in his way.

It was obvious that he just obtained an enlightenment and progressed a step forward.

Also, although it was not common in Act 2, it was something that could be observed from a few people once in a long while.

However, Vulcan was already a newbie at an unimaginable height that defied the common sense. Yet he moved another step forward. It was the first time for them to witness something like this.

‘Really... he is like a fiend.’

The horse-faced man shook his body.

It was not that he was feeling fear from realizing Vulcan’s strength.

On the other hand, it was not that he was still angry about this assignment not going smoothly.

Instead, as he watched Vulcan becoming stronger without bound, he was thinking about the future full of joy and expectations.

He wondered what kind of incredible results would be achieved

from researching the body of a runt who had monstrous growth like Vulcan.

Also, the horse-faced man wondered how much stronger he could get from applying the result of the research on himself.

Just thinking about him engulfed him in pure thrill. He could not hold still from the excitement.

His change in mood was so sudden. It was hard to believe that he was venting his frustration just a moment ago.

The horse-faced man had been criticizing others, calling them retards or dumbassess. However, he was also a part of the Bae Su Jin, which was a gathering of those with strange personalities.

The horse-faced man was not a normal man.

Like that, he was deep in his pipe-dream. He soon got a hold of himself and said to the one-eyed man,

“I don’t think this will work. Call the captain and ask him to come.”

“Pardon? We are here to catch just a newbie. Is there really a need to ask the captain to... Let’s just wait a little longer until Vulcan comes out.”

“You rascal. What are you going to do if there is an underground pathway below? Don’t you know that there are many weird caves or pathways in Act 2? Are you planning on making another inquiries to the Oracle after losing him here? Do you have a lot of money?”

“I’ll call the captain right away.”

“Tsk... Also, you just saw it. That runt became even stronger. With just us, at our strengths, we will definitely end up with casualties.”

“That... I guess that definitely could happen. I understand.”

The one-eyed man shriveled and tried to use the communication magic immediately.

The horse-faced man gave a quick glance at the horse-faced man and directed his gaze at the crater once again.

It was not that he had any plan in particular in doing so.

It was just that he had nothing else to do. So, he vacantly stared at the crater that Vulcan entered.

It was at that moment.

Papapat!



Crunch.

It appeared at an instant. With its gigantic mouth, it bite off the one-eyed man's head in whole. It was a man in black getup.

It was Forwaru, the ferocious eater.

Half of the one-eyed man's head was gone. His body collapsed before he could use the communication magic.

“You son of a b...!”

Twt!

He spat out harsh curses and quickly retreated. However, the horse-faced man was not able to handle Forwaru's speed.

Forwaru spat the skull and brain fluid inside his mouth toward the horse-faced man to block his vision. Using explosive dash, Forwaru got to right in front of the horse-faced man.

Forwaru's hammer like fist got planted on the pit of the horse-faced man's stomach. Before the horse-faced man could even scream like a horse, he lost his life.

Purng!

Tatak, tatak...

His flesh got spread all over the area like a firework.

It was a cruel, disgusting sight to stare with eyes open. However, it did not faze Forwaru at all.

He quickly looked around the area. As soon as he became certain that nobody saw what he just did, he jumped into the crater.

Of course, it was after he finished disposing the dead bodies. He finished it clean.

Splash!

Korururururu...

The horse-faced man and one-eyed man were no more. Also, even Forwaru, who ambushed them, was now gone from the scene. The Lava Field was filled only with silence flowing through the air.

It became a desolate, lonely place. However, there was an existence that was watching the scene from a far.

There were Chimeras that hid themselves by burrowing to the ground. Through those Chimeras, there was a man who was watching the situation from a safe place.

The old man, the Chimera maker, broke cold sweats and mumbled by himself.

“Who is that runt now? Fuck. Why is there more and more showing up?”

The situation happened so fast that he didn't even have the time to adjust the quality of the visual.

So, he was not able to figure out who it was exactly. However, he figured out one thing. This one was incredibly strong. It was giving him the creeps.

Chimera maker felt that he could not be certain of the victory even if all 15 of the Chimeras fought this one at once.

This one was incredibly strong, a being who was rare even in Act 2. With such a being making an entrance to the situation, the old man felt like his skull was being pulled out.

‘Ugh... Just to how many people has the information been leaked to... Also, where did that Player runt go to... I don't think the Chimeras that I sent to that location can handle entering there.’

The old man's agony deepened.

His forehead was completely crumpled, and the wrinkles became

gradually deeper. They explained how complicated his head and mind were at the moment.

However, no matter how many times he repeated his thoughts, he could not think of anything in particular that was going to help the situation.

If it was not for that unidentified monstrous man, waiting until the prey came out of the crater would have been a doable option. However, now the old man could not even do that.

‘Uuu... I wish there was a hidden pathway underneath the crater so even that god damn bastard would lose him. If that happened, I will get another chance... What the... Who are those runts now?’

It was the Bae Su Jin’s main force that arrived late.

Confused, they looked around the Lava Field. Having noticed them, the old man hurriedly hid the Chimeras deep into the ground.

In the end, the old man could not hold his anger anymore. He screamed out loud like an animal.

“Kuuuuuaaaaaaaaaa! Just why are there so many of these flies getting tangled up!”

Bam Bam Bam Bam.

Unable to handle his anger, he rammed his head at the wall.

Kiiiaaaaaa.

There was just the newly made Chimera maid that was watching him from a distance.

\*

Vulcan entered the crater where it was boiling with flames.

He currently had absolutely no idea what was happening around him, not even in his dreams. Instead, he was fully focused on finding the location of the hidden quest.

The inside of the crater was wider and deeper than he thought.

From the outside, the crater looked like a small lake. When he entered below, the surface was like the size of the entrance for a vase in comparison to what was underneath it. It was that wide.

It was definitely not normal.

So, because of that fact, Vulcan could be certain that this place was a hidden quest area.

‘All hidden quest areas that I had seen so far were not normal, so...’

Vulcan diligently moved his body and got to the bottom of the crater. He looked around the crater in search of the engraving that Beruneru told him about.

‘A devil... An engraving of a devil with wings... Kuuuk. This place is really hot.’

Vulcan was at SS rank with the fire mastery. Even with this, it was going to be difficult for him to withstand the heat here for long.

Vulcan busily moved around to find the engraving quickly. Eventually, at a corner, he found the engraving of a devil that was drawn in black color.

‘Um... I think this is right.’

It had a huge body. It looked like a predator.

Its head had two horns attached to it. Behind the body, there were wings.

It was a devil no matter who looked at it.

Vulcan peeked a smile as he watched the engraving. However, he

felt the extreme heat from the crater that was trying to boil him alive. That suddenly got him to get a hold of himself.

He then focused his mana and started a flame magic that he was most confident about.

‘Above the devil engraving, he said I should use the most powerful flame magic... Ifrit’s Fist is not bad, but the Super Heated Inferno is the best when it comes to the flame magic.’

Stream of flame poured down from underneath Vulcan’s feet and covered the devil engraving.

Usually, Super Heated Inferno spread and covered a wide area. However, this time, the area was fixed to exactly the shape of the engraving and flames were burning up just there.

It was thanks to Vulcan’s fine control, which was possible from having achieved SS rank in flame mastery.

Like that, a few seconds had passed. The devil engraving below Vulcan’s feet was showing a change.

Two lights appeared from the place that was estimated to be its face.

The lights were like two eyes of the devil, and Vulcan flinched from seeing them. Meanwhile, from the two lights, something like laser beams were shot out.

Also, at the end of the beams, red colored portal slowly appeared.

‘That’s it!’

The scene looked similar to how it was when Vulcan entered the Abandoned Dungeon at the Beloong City. He thought he was lucky inside as he charged toward the portal.

It was like a well-trained lion jumping into the ring of fire. Vulcan, in a cool diving pose, entered right into the portal.

Woooong.

The portal was waving with red light. As soon as it swallowed Vulcan, it quickly disappeared. The devil engraving, which generated the portal, disappeared as if it was never there in the first place.

After that, a moment later...

Kuuwaaaaaaaaa.

There was a man with shark teeth that came down through the lava with rough movements.

Forwaru cast over 20 barriers to protect his body and thoroughly looked around the area.



‘I came down as I thoroughly searched from the top. He could not have ran away by going up.’

Violent energy was exuding from Forwaru’s body.

It was not like he could do anything to Vulcan at the moment since Vulcan still had the protective blessing.

However, if there was a hidden pathway here and Vulcan escaped through there, it was not going to be a good idea to just wait above.

Also, although he had been looking around and around the area, he could not find Vulcan. He concluded that there really must be a pathway that lead to somewhere else.

Forwaru figured Vulcan must have headed to a hidden dungeon that only he knew.

Forwaru peeked a smile with his wide torn mouth.

‘I should find the hidden pathway and sneak in there. I should catch him alive as soon as the protective blessing ends. Kuuuu. Nobody else saw Vulcan jumping in here other than me. I don’t have competitions anymore!’

Having thought this far, he turned light on his eyes and looked all over the place, anywhere that looked suspicious.

However, no matter how long he searched, he could not find any hidden pathway or safe place.

He could not understand what was happening. Forwaru was about to explode from being frustrated. However, it could not be helped.

The mana for maintaining the barriers was about to be depleted. In the end, Forwaru, with tears in his eyes, had no choice but to jump out of the crater.

Pusuuuu.

“What the?”

“Who is that?”

Bae Su Jin’s main force had been looking for the horse-face man and one-eyed man who they lost contact with. They were surprised by Forwaru who suddenly came out of the crater.

However, they did not panic for long. They concluded that he must have something to do with the current situation, so they started pouring magic attacks at Forwaru.

Baboboboboom!

Pazuzuzuzuzuk!

All sorts of magic attacks came flying at Forwaru.

Suddenly facing attacks, Forwaru said as if he chewed it and spat it out.

“Kuuuu... These miserable pricks!”

If this was any other day, let alone receiving any significant damage, Forwaru could have handled them all. However, at the moment, Forwaru was quite exhausted.

At this rate, Forwaru was going to fall before them if he fought them.

Forwaru held on to his fury. He cast barrier and quickly ran for it.

“Catch that runt! He must have something to do with this!”

Bae Su Jin’s mages quickly responded and pursued him. However, it was to no avail.

To start with, the difference in their heights were too substantial.

Even the greatest warrior among the main force was about on par with the horse-faced man.

Although Forwaru was exhausted, his level exceeded 880. It was impossible for them to catch up to Forwaru.

“Huuuk. Huuuk.”

In the end, Forwaru was able to safely run away to somewhere with nobody around.

He was breathing hard. He looked around and confirmed there was nothing. He canceled the barrier.

He drank the potion he brought with him just in case and brought out a return scroll on his hand.

He watched the surrounding extremely carefully like a wounded beast.

Having realized it was safe enough for him to use the return scroll, he roughly tore the scroll.

Woooong.

Surrounded by blue light, Forwaru disappeared. The look on his face was completely crumpled.

Forwaru said,

“Was that Bae Su Jin... or some other runts... I don't know which runts they were, but I'll chew on every pieces of their bones.”

# Chapter 77 - Skill Acquired

---

[Quest Generated!]

[Hidden Quest – Defeat Barlock Belgeram, the boss monster of the Lava Demon Cave.]

[Difficulty – A (Asgard Standard)]

[Reward – Choose one from items or skill.]

Defeat Barlock Belgeram who sealed himself to atone for his sins.

\*Hidden quest's limit on number of people that can enter – One person

\*Boss room level limit – 800Lv (Recommends 850Lv or above)

\*Feel the power of Barlock, a powerful demon who uses flame whip. He demonstrates incredible strength in both physical power and magical abilities.

“All right. This dungeon is also limited to just one person.”

Vulcan moved to a stone room that had red light lingering.

Vulcan had been looking at the SYSTEM notification window. His face brightened.

The protective blessing was about to run out.

His days of peaceful and joyful level ups were about to end. He was going to have to be always weary of the surroundings as he hunt and conserve stamina and mana for emergencies at all times. Thinking about it was making his stomach ache. Now, those worries were completely gone.

This hunting ground was perfect. Nobody could enter here now.

It was the greatest gift for Vulcan.

‘Well, even if it was not limited to just one person, I think there probably is almost nobody who would come to find this place, but...’

The condition to finding it was convoluted as it was.

Vulcan thought he was extremely fortunate that he reached SS rank for the Fire Mastery before his protective blessing ran out.

If he didn’t make the progress until the blessing ran out, he would not have been able to come to this hunting ground.

‘Anyway, I succeeded. Now, I can put my mind at ease for next 10 to 15 years.’

Vulcan smiled confidently.

He found the hidden quest area. This didn’t mean he only earned 10 years of time.

Objectively speaking, Vulcan could handle about five Chimeras at his current strength.

‘By the time I leave this place?

Handling ten at once might be possible. No, it definitely is possible!

Once I get to that height, I don’t need to shake in fear all the time about ambush.

No matter how they ambush me, and no matter how many they bring, I can leisurely respond to the attack. I would at least have the time to use Kina Kina the beast bird.’

Having thought this far, his chest felt light. He leisurely looked around the area.

“Hm... This place is similar. No. Is it a little different?”



The stone room was about the same size as the Ancient Gang-shi Factory, the hidden quest area that Vulcan went to last time.

However, the new hidden quest area was far rougher around the edges.

Gang-shi Factory had slick and polished stone walls, and the place had all sorts of engravings. On the other hand, this new place looked like a natural cave was haphazardly excavated.

It was not as interesting to check out. Vulcan, with uninterested face, went straight to the entrance.

The stone door had an engraving that looked just like the demon engraving he saw at the crater outside earlier. Next to the stone door was a large headstone.

Vulcan slowly read the letters written on the headstone.

[You were born evil. However, you have realized the fault in your ways on your own. You are seeking atonement, and that is commendable. However, cleansing the demon's energy inside you cannot be done in a short period of time. Spend 5000 years to reflect on your sins and atone for your past. I wish you will be reborn as a good being.]

‘It looks like someone who really existed in Act 2 is imprisoned

here.'

Vulcan activated the Thunder God's Might and kicked to open the door.

After that, with confident steps, he walked forward.

Soon, a monster with level even higher than the Master Gang-shi showed itself.

It had a violent looking face. Vulcan looked at the bastard and shouted with confidence,

"Bring it on, experience points."

\*

The monsters in the second hidden quest dungeon were definitely not easy to fight.

They had masculine bodies that were conditioned to the peak performances, and their bodies were wrapped in flames. Lava Demon Force... Their levels were around 800.

They were confident about their ridiculous physical specs. They charged at Vulcan like berserkers.

In a way, they were similar to the Poisonous Gang-shis from the Gang-shi Factory. However, these Lava Demons were far more difficult to deal with.

They had explosive speed that defied common sense. They poured out attacks endlessly.

Although they were acting without any thoughts or plans, they were using their sharp senses to aim for gaps in defenses.

The monsters at the Gang-shi Factory felt like they were top-notch martial warriors. In comparison, the Lava Demon Forces were like beasts that relied only on instincts.

No, they felt like they were like the demons that Vulcan saw at the lower dimension.

‘These guys are the real Demon Force. Even a Count among the ones I met in the lower dimension had only about level 400. Are these guys Dukes or something?’

Vulcan had no way of finding out, and it was not important.

The real important fact was that they were the most difficult monster to fight, more so than anything that Vulcan encountered until now.

Vulcan was most comfortable with fighting giant monsters.

Giant monsters were usually slow, and they had defensive abilities to make up for their slow speed.

However, no matter how strong their defenses were, there never was any monster that could withstand Vulcan's Thunder God Blade technique.

So, against the Hell Fire Lizards, the kind that barely moved from where they stood during a combat, Vulcan could fight like a tiger with wings, demonstrating dauntlessness and sharpness throughout the battle.

‘On the other hand, with these guys... It's difficult.’

It was difficult for Vulcan to fight against small monsters, especially the ones that were fast enough to handle Vulcan's speed.

It was possible to kill them in one strike as long as they were hit by the Thunder God Blade.

However, it was incredibly difficult for Vulcan to get to that.

Vulcan felt that difficulty for the first time when he fought the Master Gang-shi.

That bastard was on par with Vulcan's speed. Also, during the beginning of the battle, Master Gang-shi even overwhelmed

Vulcan with his speed.

Even today, it sent down chills to Vulcan's bones when he thought about that battle. There was no need to explain again how difficult it was for Vulcan to fight Master Gang-shi.

Now, although the Lava Demons' combat style was different from Master Gang-shi, they were very fast, not far behind from Vulcan's speed.

Vulcan had to exchange numerous blows with them before he could land a strike. In the process, Vulcan ended up wasting a lot of time, slowing down his level up speed.

“Ugh, this is tough.”

Vulcan defeated yet another Lava Demon and mumbled.

Of course, it was not like Lava Demons were strong enough to overwhelm Vulcan in a one-on-one battle.

That was because Vulcan became substantially stronger than before.

Even during the battle just now, Vulcan sent out continuous barrage of lightning magic to stun the Lava Demon. Vulcan concluded the battle while never losing his upper hand.

The experience points were higher than he expected, and good items came from slaying them as well.

In particular, there were a lot of Vitality Marbles. Saying that they were pouring out was not doing justice to just how much of them dropped from killing the Lava Demons.

Other than the fact that the monsters were a little tougher and took longer to kill, Vulcan had nothing else to feel dissatisfied about.

However, there was a reason why Vulcan was not relaxing his hardened face.

He was diligently leveling up at a safe hunting ground. However, Vulcan was feeling frustrated. It was purely due to his greed.

‘Phew... Am I being too greedy?’

It had been 15 years since Vulcan came to Act 2.

For the first 10 years, Vulcan really focused only on leveling up without thinking about anything else.

Forest area, Poisonous Crater Field, Gang-shi Factory, and the Lava Field that he was just before coming to this hidden quest area...

Vulcan had a goal. He had to get stronger as fast as possible before the protective blessing expired. With that focus, Vulcan burned with passion through those years. All of other distracting thoughts were burnt away in the process. Also, Vulcan was able to obtain rewards that were worthy of his efforts.

‘Fire Mastery SS rank... Iron Body S rank, Weapon Mastery S rank... Those are more than enough as the rewards and results for my efforts.’

However, those firework-like 10 years passed. Vulcan now had spent five years at a safe hunting ground called Lava Demon Cave.

Vulcan was feeling boredom. He had never felt this before. It was sickening.

None of his masteries improved.

They didn’t just not improve. They were not showing any signs of improving.

Back in his old days, training whole-heartedly for one year sometimes led to sudden enlightenment. Grinding for two years at a hunting ground sometimes led to discovering something.

Although the last Fire Mastery increase took seven years of dogged grinding, Vulcan was propelled by the hope that felt like he just needed to go a little further. Through those seven years, Vulcan didn’t even realize the passage of time.

Vulcan was deep into the joy and excitement of becoming stronger, and that made him give it everything he had and some more. Now, the situation he was in felt stagnant. It was gifting him with a horrifying sense of frustration.

The only thing that made Vulcan feel better was the level up notification.

However, that was not enough to refresh his clogged up heart.

Vulcan sighed big.

“Phew...”

Vulcan tapped at his head with his hand. He tried to calm his mind.

He was aware he was being greedy. He knew he should be feeling fortunate instead.

He was improving too fast in his past.

Other people spent a lot longer time in the state of stagnancy. They spent several times longer, sometimes several ten folds longer, like that.

While Vulcan was getting frustrated just from five years of time,



others stood on roads with no path forward for a hundred years or longer, and they did so while being tormented by extreme anxieties, thinking that they might be at their limit or there is nothing else they could overcome from that point.

Compared to them, Vulcan was at least growing through continued level up. Vulcan's situation was a hundred times better.

‘I know. I know, but... It cannot be helped that I feel so frustrated.’

Vulcan put away his Heavenly Lightning Blade to the sheath and returned to the dungeon's entrance.

He was concerned something bad might happen if he continued hunting with his current mindset.

After five years since coming into the dungeon, Vulcan finally took a long break.

Vulcan's body no longer needed sleep. However, he forced himself to go to sleep. He also suppressed his constant urge to use magic.

Vulcan thought he fell to a slump because he had been running while only looking at the front.

Vulcan intentionally spent two days without doing anything.

Having forced himself to spend the time away like that, he naturally ended up with a lot of distracting thoughts.

Worries he usually never even thought of and memories of the past were jumbled up in his head and floating around.

‘Will I be able to clear Act 2? Well, it will work out somehow, right?’

‘Now that I think about it, I improved ridiculously fast at Act 1.’

‘Those were the good old days. Rewards above efforts put in were overflowing during those days. Phew... What I’m getting right now is probably normal. I should realize this, yet...’

‘There were a lot of sons of bitches there, but there were also good people. Filder, Jake, Beruneru, Logweed, DokGo Hoo...’

“Dokgo Hoo?”

Vulcan was lying on the ground. He suddenly raised up his upper body.

‘Now that I think about it, I can summon him!’

Vulcan’s face brightened. He brought out Kina Kina the beast bird.

He injected mana into Kina Kina. Before the bird could even chirp, he pushed in Vitality Marbles to it.

He pushed in some, and then he pushed more in.

Vulcan had plenty of the marbles. Spending enough to summon the lowest enlightened god was not going to put a dent on the overall amount he had.

Soon, Dokgo Hoo was summoned in semi-transparent state.

Vulcan was glad to see him. As he walked toward Dokgo Hoo, Vulcan, out of habit, checked Dokgo Hoo's abilities.

[Lowest Ranked Battle God Dokgo Hoo]

[585Lv]

His level was up 44 since last time.

He trained as an enlightened god for the past 15 years and achieved this.

Compared to other enlightened gods at his class, Dokgo Hoo's development was on the faster side. However, Vulcan didn't know

this.

Vulcan merely felt sorry for Dokgo Hoo for developing even slower than himself.

- Huhu. It's been a while. Little Brother. Did you call me because you need my strength?

“... I'm not interested in subjecting you to torture.”

- What? Did you just belittle me?

Dokgo Hoo was up in arms in anger. He roared and demanded Vulcan to bring a monster immediately. Vulcan couldn't let that happen.

‘If Big Brother fought a 800 level monster, he will be killed at an instant!’

Vulcan desperately tried to calm down Dokgo hoo. After about ten minutes later, they were finally able to have conversation normally.

However, they had some ridiculous conversations.

Most of them were about monsters they slayed, saying how one was sliced to pieces, etc. Most of them were gruesome to hear.

Also, besides the gruesomeness of the stories, the topics of discussions were all there to there, so the interest for conversation subsided quickly.

However, it was obvious.

Vulcan had not been doing anything else but slaying monsters until now.

They quickly ran out of things to talk about. Vulcan, with awkward look on his face, looked at Dokgo Hoo.

- What is it? You don't have anything else to say?

"That's right. I don't have anything else. What about you, Big Brother?"

- The training I do is even more repetitive and boring than yours. It won't be any fun for you to hear. I'm doing the same thing I had been 15 years ago.

"Huh... I can see how you must be sick of it."

The topic of conversation naturally moved on to training.

Because Vulcan ran out of things to talk about, he thought this was actually good. Vulcan described in verbose detail about the slump he was in.

‘Although he may not look the part, Big Brother Dokgo Hoo had trained for a very long time. He must have some advice for me about being in a stagnant situation!’

Vulcan had hope like that. So, Vulcan explained for a long time about his situation. However, he had no choice but to stop because Dokgo Hoo suddenly interrupted and yelled.

- I think I have never seen a worse son of a bitch than you. Are you throwing a tantrum because you had been standing still only for five years? You rascal! You sure have your stomach full, really full!

## Chapter 78 - Skill Acquired (2)

---

Dokgo Hoo's voice was so loud that the voice echoed to the deafening level inside the stone room. Vulcan was shocked. Vulcan blocked his ears and complained,

“Big Brother! What was that for!”

- You are pouring out in lengthy detail about some bullcrap, so I thought it was ridiculous.

“What do you mean ridiculous? I was talking to you because I was frustrated and confused. Geez...”

Vulcan still complained.

Dokgo Hoo was seriously mad. His face crumpled.

His semi-transparent body was shaking out of anger. His loud yelling was about to happen once more. At that moment, out of curiosity, Dokgo Hoo tossed a question at Vulcan.

- By any chance, is this the first time you ran into a wall while training?

“Um...”

Having heard what Dokgo Hoo said, Vulcan carefully thought

about his past.

With his right hand fiddling with his chin, Vulcan thought about it for a long time. Vulcan slowly said,

“Once...? When we were at the Cursed Underground Graveyard... with Lee Jung-yup... a little bit...”

- You rotten brat! You wrapped Ho-gyeong and Bellon in cabbages and ate them in just two years, yet you have the nerve to complain? Oh my... This brat really is a genius.

Vulcan didn't know what to say. He just listened.

Dokgo Hoo was also a genius who was praised by everyone at Act 1.

Vulcan was glad to hear Dokgo Hoo say that he was a genius. However, it didn't look like the situation was right for Vulcan to just say thank you in response.

Silence filled the stone room for a moment.

It was because Dokgo Hoo also didn't say anything.

“ ... ”



About a minute passed.

Looking at Dokgo Hoo, who was floating in the air like a ghost, Vulcan was about to say something to break the uncomfortable silence. However, Dokgo Hoo's voice could be heard first.

- Do you know Yur Dong-bin?

“Pardon?”

- Just... do you know him or not!

“Could you stop yelling? I know him, I know! You are talking about the top-notch battle god, right?”

Yur Dong-bin was the top-notch battle god that Dokgo-hoo cursed about in great detail during the last time he was summoned by Vulcan.

During that time, Dokgo Hoo complained like a daughter-in-law complaining about her fate for being relentlessly criticized by the mother-in-law, keeping it fresh in his memory. Vulcan definitely remembered in his brain that Yur Dong-bin was a powerful enlightened god.

- That's right. Yur Dong-bin. The one I always curse. That bastard. He is one of the top dogs of the Enlightened World. He has a terrible personality, but he is super strong. He is probably around level 900 if we used your metrics.

“Hm. I see.”

- How long do you think he invested to get to where he is?

Vulcan was not able to answer right away.

He can only figure that it must have taken a long time. He couldn't imagine exactly how long.

‘Still, he must be incredibly talented, so... 200 to 300 years? Perhaps 500 years?’

Vulcan was not confident about the number to actually say it.

It seemed that Dokgo Hoo was not expecting an answer. He promptly said,

- It took him 3700 years, you disgusting brat.

That far exceeded Vulcan's expectation. Vulcan had a vacant look on his face.

In silence, with a stupid look on his face, Vulcan stared at Dokgo Hoo.

Dokgo Hoo continued.

- You think his training was fun? Maybe he did lots of fun trainings when he was a human. When he became an enlightened god, I've heard that he just sat in cross-legged position at the top of a mountain. While other enlightened gods were falling out of exhaustion, he did it for over 3000 years. You get it, you rascal?

“ ... ”

- I don't know exactly what your height is at the moment, but it looks like you are on par with a mid-level enlightened god, am I right?

“Yes, well...”

Vulcan honestly thought he might be able to fight evenly against even the top-notch enlightened gods, but he didn't say it.

- You didn't even spend 30 years in swordsmanship and magic, but you are already looking like a mid-level god among the enlightened gods.

“ ... ”

- You bastard. Ordinary people in the lower dimensions have tough time just becoming the leader of some warrior clan after training for 30 years like their life depended on it. Do you have any idea how ungrateful you are being right now? You brat!

“Just why are you always ending your sentences with swearing...”

- Just shut up you bastard! You are driving me to madness, fuck.

Dokgo Hoo's energetic swearing continued while Vulcan stood there like an obedient child.

It wasn't because of Dokgo Hoo's swearing.

Dokgo Hoo was a short-tempered man. Despite this, he said many things calmly and even included examples. His warm words of consolations were merely wearing the mask of criticism. Although it was just a little bit, Dokgo Hoo's words calmed Vulcan's impatience.

Vulcan decided that he would sit quietly and listen carefully no matter what Dokgo Hoo was going to say.

Dokgo Hoo also didn't swear anymore.

- Kuhm... Anyway. You need to be more thankful about the talent you have. It seems that you are not getting a feel for it because you don't have anyone else next to you who are training with you. There are countless people all over who can't get to an eighth of where you are after training for a hundred years. Do you understand?

“Yes. Thank you for the advice, Big Brother.”

Vulcan promptly bowed to Dokgo Hoo.

Considering how Dokgo Hoo usually was, the long-winded explanation that he just gave was unthinkable.

Because of this, Vulcan was even more thankful, so he showed gratitude from bottom of his heart.

Dokgo Hoo's face looked like he was thinking that the gratitude was well-deserved. Dokgo Hoo added,

- Well, if this is the first time for you to really run into a wall, I can see why you would get impatient. It's not like you have a teacher next to you. Just be thankful that you have a magnificent Big Brother like me. HAHAHA!

“... Yes.”

- From what you said so far, this place is safe anyway, right? It's not like you are being chased by time like how it was at the Belong City. So, take time and reflect on things from the past occasionally. Hm... For instance, try training on passive skills you have not used much until now.

“Pardon? Those are not my specialties... I'm really no good at anything except fire and lightning.”

Vulcan was not feigning.

Unlike Lightning and Fire Masteries, which were at SS ranks, his Wind and Earth Masteries were merely at B ranks.

In other words, they were outside of being useful as his main strength.

Vulcan's excuse was not just an excuse. It was fact. However, Dokgo Hoo retorted impatiently.

- You rascal! When you run into a wall while doing what you had been doing, try other things, got it? Poke on things here and there; that's how it works! While you are at it, if you go back to what you had been doing afterwards, it could work out again. You get it, you brat? Is it because you've never ran into a wall before? You don't know how to go back to things.

"Hm... If you are in a hurry, then go back..."

- What bullshit are you talking about? You are not even in a hurry.

"... Actually, I am not in a hurry. You are right."

Watching Vulcan willingly agree, Dokgo Hoo laughed heartily.

- KUHAHA. You are finally recognizing my greatness. How about

it? Have you found some respect for your Big Brother?

“Yes...”

Vulcan responded with an awkward face.

However, Dokgo Hoo didn't mind it.

It seemed Dokgo Hoo was not intending to remember all the things he was mad about earlier. He had a refreshed look on his face. He said good bye to Vulcan.

- Well then, I'll get going now. When you call me again next time, don't ask me about these useless things.

Like a ghost, he slid toward Kina Kina's mouth. He shrunk to fit inside Kina Kina's mouth before adding one last thing to say.

- Also... Next time, instead of summoning the lowest battle god, summon low-rank battle god. I'll get to that level by then.

With that as the last words, Dokgo Hoo disappeared before even hearing Vulcan's response.

“ ... ”

Dokgo Hoo, who had been speaking in deafeningly loud voice

inside the stone room, was now gone. Silence came to fill the air again.

Vulcan, in middle of the silence, slowly lied down on the stone room's floor and thought about what Dokgo Hoo just told him until now.

‘Actually, it’s not like a definite answer came up.’

What Dokgo Hoo told Vulcan were things that anyone could say.

In summary, Dokgo Hoo told Vulcan that anyone can run into walls, so Vulcan should not worry too much and try everything.

In a way, what he told Vulcan were obvious things.

However, Vulcan didn’t think such an obvious advice could give him this much strength.

Vulcan felt so refreshed inside. He mumbled,

“Could it be that I needed someone to spill my guts out and complain?”

Vulcan was not sure about his own feelings on this matter.

‘Well, it is not important.’



First, Vulcan got up right away. He then brought out the Heavenly Lightning Blade.

He surrounded himself with the Thunder God's Might. On his left hand, a magic was initiated. It was the kind that he had never used.

Wheeeeeeeeeeing.

The sound was like a rapidly spinning blade.

It was the wind magic.

‘What’s really important is that I want to try again now.’

Vulcan kicked open the door and quickly entered the Lava Cave.

Vulcan's steps were energetic. The sense of hesitation, anxiety and frustration that he had before talking to Dokgo Hoo was no longer there.

It looked like Vulcan grew up and toughened up a little.

\*

Again, five years had gone by.

Vulcan's current level was 787.

His level up speed was significantly slower than before. Still, Vulcan didn't mind it.

Unless the monsters' levels increased to match his growth, there was a limit on how much further Vulcan could grow in level.

There was no need for Vulcan to try to level up as if he was on a time attack.

Moreover, thanks to Dokgo Hoo's advice, Vulcan completely resolved his impatience.

Unlike his first five years at the Lava Cave, where Vulcan focused only on leveling up and repeated hunting, Vulcan had been trying various things as he passed time.

Uuuudududuuk.

From the dungeon's walls, floor, and ceiling... From all over the place, large lumps of stones came off and gathered in mid-air.

A collection of boulders was floating in the air. It was gigantic and overwhelming in size.

The collection of boulders changed again.

Kuwagagagaak.

Kuguk... Kuguguguk.

From the size of a house, the collection became the size of a person, and then to the size of a small animal, and then to the size of a child's fist.

Although the collection of boulders became small, it was exuding sensation that was even more dangerous than before.

Vulcan had been fighting a Lava Demon that was coming at him relentlessly, and Vulcan completed this process while fighting. He sighed in relief.

‘Phew. As I thought, earth magic is not a good match for me. This is my limit.’

From other people's standard, Vulcan completed magic very quickly. However, from Vulcan's standard, he was seriously lacking in speed.

Vulcan judged that further attempts to change the earth magic could only be detrimental to his current situation. He used fire magic, which was his specialty.

Whooosh.

He wrapped the tan colored sphere of rocks with compressed Ifrit's Fist.

Ifrit's Fist was significantly higher level magic than the earth magic that Vulcan just used. However, the Ifrit's Fist was completed much faster.

Vulcan finally smiled, satisfied. He kicked the Lava Demon hard.

Pang.

Kuwgagagagagk.

From the reaction, Vulcan was pushed back to the distance. The Lava Demon was sent to the opposite direction, destroying the ground along the way.

The Lava Demon quickly regained its battle stance. It was about to charge at Vulcan again. Vulcan launched the magic attacks that he spent quite a lot of effort into completing them.

Suuuuuaaaaaaaaaaak.

Kuwaaaaaaaaang!

Various types of magic attacks, which were enhanced in rotational power and speed through wind magic, came falling at

the Lava Demon. Having sustained significant shock, it fell on its knees.

That was a huge gap in its defense. Vulcan was not going to let this opportunity to just slip by.

Before long, Vulcan got to right in front of the bastard. Vulcan's blade started to exude golden energy.

Slice.

[Your experience points went up.]

[You defeated an opponent that is stronger than you!]

[You achieved an exploit.]

[Your exploit points went up.]

“Uuuuaaaa. This is tough. Its destructive power is good, but it's still too slow.”

Vulcan mumbled as he wiped off the sweat on his forehead.

For the past five years, Vulcan had been diligently following

Dokgo Hoo's advice and training on other types of magic little by little.

However, he didn't train using just these other types.

Vulcan had been barely managing to fight the monsters using SS ranked lightning and fire magic.

On the other hand, the other types barely got to A rank from five years of training. Fighting the monsters using just the other types was going to be like spinning the wheel.

So, Vulcan had been working hard on using them as the support magic.

They were used to increase the destructive power of the lightning and fire magic.

Of course, Vulcan had not been doing it often. Also, because his understanding of these other types of magic was still not very good, using them for support was not easy.

There were times when Vulcan got seriously discouraged while attempting grandiose magic of these other types.

However, Vulcan came to acknowledge that he was not talented at these other types of magic. He focused on few magic spells that fit him well and were efficient. As of result, he was able to make pretty good magic spells with these other types.

The 'Destructive Core' that he just used was one of them.

'I am still not satisfied with the casting speed, but... I probably will get better as I try it more.'

Vulcan thought about the first time he tried the Destructive Core.

The core sphere was being created at a snail pace. It was so slow that there was no way for him to use it on actual combat. He remembered sighing often from watching it form.

Compared to back then, the casting speed now was the difference between the ground and the sky. Saying that was not an exaggeration.

"Well, I have plenty of time, so let's keep going at a comfortable pace."

Vulcan's mindset was far more relaxed than was before.

The spell's formation speed was not good enough yet, but an obstacle like this was nothing to him.

Vulcan walked away to find another monster to fight so he could practice the Destructive Core more.

Vulcan was the kind that preferred training through real combat.

His plan was to increase the casting speed through continued battle against Lava Demons.

However, something happened that made him stop walking.

Pshuuuuuk.

The cool and refreshing energy that always had been surrounding Vulcan's body...

The high end version of Blue Dragon's Breath had expired and disappeared.

Vulcan felt the sudden emptiness inside. He shook his body and mumbled,

“... It feels like I suddenly took all of my clothes off.”



## Chapter 79 - Skill Acquired (3)

---

The Blue Dragon's Breath had been with Vulcan for the past 20 years.

Because he had it for so long, he could not remember very well about how he was before acquiring the Blue Dragon's Breath. Because Vulcan had it for so long and was accustomed to it, having it suddenly disappear like that made him feel empty. The sense of loss was more significant than he thought.

Vulcan stood at the spot and thought hard about it for a moment.

'I have plenty of the Vitality Marbles. They should be enough to pay for high quality version of the Blue Dragon's Breath... but do I really need it now?'

For leveling up, it could be said that the Blue Dragon's Breath, which gave Vulcan 30 levels' worth of stats boost, was critical.

It was because Vulcan could hunt faster and longer as much as the improved stats allowed.

However, when it came to the subject of training, the importance of the Blue Dragon's Breath became questionable.

Vulcan honestly thought that it would only get in the way of training and could not possibly help.

‘Now that I think about it, it sure is. I’m not trying to level up; I’m training. I have no need to train with loads of boosters attached to me. It’s not like I can’t fight a one on one battle without the booster either.’

While thinking, Vulcan was activating and deactivating the Thunder God’s Blade technique repeatedly out of habit.

His moment deep in thought with his head down didn’t last long. He started to walk and thought,

‘That’s right. It’s not like I really need it at the moment. Although it is only a little bit, I can save the Vitality Marbles too. So... I’ll just use them later. I should be all right if I used it just before the boss room.’

Vulcan, with an upbeat attitude, came to the conclusion. With a lightened mind, Vulcan started training.

Again, the sound of earth shaking spread through the dungeon, and countless Lava Demon Forces disappeared after becoming Vulcan’s experience points.

Like that, time passed, and a month later...

Vulcan was still practicing the Destructive Core, a multi-elemental magic spell. The casting speed was still not on par with his goal, so Vulcan had a rather unsatisfied look on his face.

Vulcan supplemented himself with a mana potion and mumbled quietly,

“I think I’ll have to do this for a few more years before I can see results. Ugh, this is tough.”

Although Vulcan was complaining with words, his body was already looking for the next opponent.

He had the attitude of a perfect training maniac. He didn’t slack off in training.

It looked like he was not going to stop for five or even ten years unless someone came to stop him.

However, there was an existence that broke Vulcan’s highly focused training.

Vulcan had the beast bird Kina Kina hanging on his waist just in case so he could summon an Enlightened God quickly during emergencies.

Kina Kina was one noisy brat, but it was just a wooden doll unless mana was injected to it. However, the bird started to wake up on its own.

Flap flap. Flap flap flap.

“Hello! Hello!”

“What is this?”

Kina Kina flapped its wings around and greeted Vulcan, taking him by surprise. Vulcan mumbled words that were not directed at the bird.

However, Kina Kina thought what Vulcan just said was directed at it, so Kina Kina answered,

“Hello! It’s my Master! You! He wants to see you!”

“What? Blue Wind the Blue Dragon wants to-?”

“Soon! Yes! He is coming...”

Kina Kina was chirping away loudly, but suddenly froze as if it was struck by a lightning.

It then opened its mouth wide and started to pour out chilling blue light into the surroundings.

Huuuooooong...

Blue Wind the Blue Dragon showed himself in the air like a hologram projection.

He looked majestic. Facing the Blue Dragon, Vulcan greeted him with a surprised look on the face.

“Uh, um. How do you do?”

“...”

Blue Wind the Blue Dragon was looking at Vulcan with an emotionless face.

Actually, his expression was not completely emotionless.

There was one spoonful's worth of dissatisfaction there which could be found only after careful observation.

It was cast on the Blue Dragon's face.

“... Is there something bothering you?”

Vulcan shriveled, so he asked carefully.

Although he had done nothing wrong, Vulcan chose to crawl on the ground already. Looking at Vulcan acting like that, Blue Wind said slowly,

“You.”

“Yes?”

“Why aren’t you renewing the contract for the Blue Dragon’s Breath?”

“... Are you here just for that?”

With a dumbfounded face, Vulcan looked at Blue Wind’s face.

‘Really? How could a God Beast be like this?

Moreover, he is not an ordinary God Beast. He is an extremely powerful one who is level 997.’

Someone so powerful and great had come all the way to visit Vulcan like a door to door salesman. Watching Blue Wind acting like this, Vulcan barely managed to stop himself from bursting into laughter.

However, Blue Wind looked serious.

Having heard what Vulcan said, Blue Wind said with a bit of anger mixed in,

“Just for that? You dare to speak that way when you know that there is nothing more important than Vitality Marbles to God Beasts!?”

“Ah, that’s not what I’m saying...”

“Also, even before 20 years ago, you were the brat who had a mountain worth of Vitality Marbles piled up, yet you have not thought about using the marbles ever since you received your first Blue Dragon’s Breath. Do you think the situation warrants me to just sit still? Have we not made a contract?”

“We did make a contract... but I said I’ll use it only when I need it, didn’t I...”

“So, when are you going to need it? If you are not going to need it through your entire life, then you will end up having the marbles piled up for the rest of your life, won’t you? Just why aren’t you using them? Your protective blessing period expired as well, so why?”

Vulcan was going to give random excuses that came to his mind. However, after seeing the look on Blue Wind’s face, Vulcan firmly shut his mouth.

It looked like Vulcan would receive a serious beating if he said one wrong word.

Of course, the Blue Dragon in front of Vulcan was just a projection. However, there was no need for Vulcan to strike the wrong chords on the Blue Dragon’s temper when the Blue Dragon was among the most powerful beings in Act 2.

With shaky voice, Vulcan said to the Blue Dragon,

“I had been staying in a safe place, so... I’ll just have 10 years’ worth of high quality Blue Dragon’s Breath...”

Blue Wind, who had been glaring at Vulcan with dissatisfied look on the face, interrupted Vulcan and said,

“Won’t it be very tough for you to live in the dangerous world of Act 2 without the protective blessing?”

Blue Wind said it in a concerned tone. However, overall atmosphere felt from him was no different from foisting.

Vulcan could not stand the ridiculousness. He talked back to the Blue Dragon as if he was making a complaint,

“This is just... This goes beyond something like asking the customer to buy a bag of oranges while buying a box of apples. You are trying to sell me the highest quality breath. Isn’t that incredibly expensive?”

“You earn a lot of marbles, don’t you? Kina Kina said you are earning Vitality Marbles like a waterfall pouring down water. Where do you intend to use them all?”

“Even so, I cannot take the highest quality breath when I don’t



even need it. Isn't that extremely inefficient for the price anyway?"

"Um. Kurhum... It's only right to stop being concerned about the cost efficiency when you get to premium product."

It seemed Vulcan got to the heart of the matter. Blue Wind lightly avoided Vulcan's gaze, and Vulcan started at him with a face that said that this was wrong.

Until this moment, Blue Wind had been excited and cornering Vulcan. However, due to over-imposing sales pitch, the situation came to where it was poking Blue Wind in the consciousness, and Blue Wind momentum in the conversation.

Unexpectedly, Vulcan took this narrow opportunity and started to make his complaint in logical steps,

"Actually, the highest quality breath is only about twice as good as the high quality breath, isn't it? Meanwhile, the cost for the highest quality breath is 60 times that of just high quality breath, so how could I afford to just spend away my Vitality Marbles? It's so expensive that I might consider using it before an ultra-critical battle. Also, although I do earn a lot of marbles, I somehow ended up with many enemies, so I am always anxious nowadays. Because of this, I need to have enough allowances to summon the Highest Battle God or greater. Ah, as I said earlier, I am at a safe place at the moment, but it is not like I can stay here for thousands or tens of thousands of years..."

“I got it! I understand, so stop explaining!”

Vulcan was yapping away endlessly like a skilled merchant lady at a traditional market district. Frustrated, Blue Wind screamed at Vulcan to stop talking.

Blue Wind shook his head left and right and stared at Vulcan with dissatisfied look on the face. Vulcan also tightly shut his mouth and stared at the Blue Dragon.

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

Like that, about a minute passed with both of them in silence.

Blue Wind was the one who broke the silence first.

He looked calmer than when he first appeared. The Blue Dragon said,

“Let me apologize. I made an unreasonable request to you. I don’t have long before achieving the result of my great work, so I am getting anxious.”

“... It’s all right. I am also sorry for speaking so freely.”

Vulcan never expected a great God Beast like Blue Wind, who had accumulated far more experiences than himself, would say something like that to him. Vulcan felt he was not deserving of such which was reflected on the look on his face. Like that, Vulcan accepted Blue Wind's apology.

Also, Vulcan thought about how frustrated this heavy-ass God Beast must have felt to bring himself all the way here and say all that. Vulcan even felt guilty thinking about it.

‘Now that I think about it, even Blue Wind must have got to where he was after several thousands of years of training. He is seeing the end of his long journey, and he met a Player. He even made a contract with me to get more Vitality Marbles yet he receive no news from me all those years. I can really understand how frustrated he must have been.’

Things Vulcan didn't think about during the heated, hectic conversation started to come to his mind little by little. Vulcan truly felt sorry now.

However, he had no intention of spending away the Vitality Marbles when he had no use for them.

The Vitality Marbles were the only method that Vulcan had for bringing about power beyond his own.

It was obvious for him to save them as much as he could.

‘Well, if there is something else I could get, then it would be a different story. Blue Wind is a great God Beast, so he probably have many useful skills... Wait.’

Blue Wind was standing there awkwardly. Standing in front of him, Vulcan too was standing with an awkward look on his face.

A new thought zapped through Vulcan’s mind.

‘I can learn it, a skillbook!’

Vulcan hurriedly said to Blue Wind,

“Blue Wind!”

“Huh? What is it?”

Vulcan suddenly stared at Blue Dragon with sparkly eyes. Facing Vulcan with eyes like that, Blue Wind asked back, wondering why.

Vulcan said in a quiet tone,

“By any chance... Do you have any leftover technique books?”

\*

Blue Wind the Blue Dragon obtained substantial amount of

Vitality Marbles.

After offering the high-quality version of the Blue Dragon's Breath to Vulcan, Blue Wind was going to end the communication, but Vulcan's satisfied face came into Blue Wind's view.

With confused look, Blue Wind asked,

"Since I received payment for it, I will give it to you, but I'm telling you, this is not something a human can master. You will have to be a God Beast, Enlightened God, Demi-god or a real God to master it. Unless you are one of those, you cannot learn it even if you stared at it for a hundred days."

"It's all right. I have a way."

"Tsk. Even a real Demi-god would take a long time to learn this, so why are you..."

"..."

"... Well, you take care of it on your own. However, I cannot give you back the Vitality Marbles. The booklet that has the land-fold technique is one of my most treasured text. It is not a copy. This one is the original, so it is only right to ask this much as the payment."

"I completely understand."

Vulcan answered as if there was nothing to worry about. He was full of confidence.

Looking at him, Blue Wind lightly shook his head and said his good bye for now.

“Well then. I’ll get going now.”

“Yes. Please be well.”

Pat.

It sounded like a home electric appliance’s power went off. Along with that sound, Blue Wind the Blue Dragon disappeared.

Kina Kina turned back to an ordinary wooden doll. Vulcan hung the doll on his waist and looked at the graceful looking booklet on his hand.

Vulcan was full of excitement and anticipations that he could not hide. His eyes were full of bliss.

[Legendary Skill – Blue Wind’s Ultimate Technique, Land-fold]

[Level Limit: 500]

[Species Limit: God Beast, Enlightened God, Demi-god, God. Mastering this technique is not possible for beings other than them.]

It allows movement as if you folded the land. With improved mastery, you can fold through a greater distance more often. It can be used during any time, during attack, evasion, movement and other situations. It is the highest level technique. It cannot be mastered by a human being.

Would you like to acquire this skill?

[Yes/No]

With shaky hand, Vulcan pressed the ‘Yes’ button on the SYSTEM notification window.

At the same time, brilliant light of all visible spectrum exploded out.

It was not through learning and understanding the technique. It felt like the technique was being engraved onto Vulcan’s soul. It felt strange and mysterious, and it shook Vulcan’s body.

After a moment...

The brilliant light that filled the stone room disappeared, and Vulcan exhaled after holding his breath during the acquisition of the technique.

Vulcan swallowed dry gulp and looked at his own feet.

It felt completely different from how it was when he acquired the Lightning Dragon Steps.

It felt like he could tear through the fabric of space and enter into the opening. Feeling the sensation, Vulcan carefully tried out the Land-fold, Blue Dragon's Ultimate Technique.

Shooooooc.

“OhOh! It works!”

It felt like about five meters of space just got erased from front of him. It was a mysterious experience to go through. Vulcan cheered out loud.

His voice was loud enough for anyone to notice that he was extremely excited.

However, it was an obvious response for Vulcan.

This was supposedly a technique of a God Beast that a human could never master.



Of them all, it was an incredible technique that had the word ‘Legendary’ in the title.

It was a significant benefit for Vulcan. It would not have been weird if Vulcan ran straight to the west island and gave a full, proper bow to the Blue Dragon.

This time, with his face full of excitement, Vulcan slowly ran to the front with the Lightning Dragon Step activated.

Vulcan was wondering if it was possible to use the Land-fold technique while moving in high speed.

Of course, the description for the skill already said it was possible to use the skill in any situation including attack, evasion and any movement. However, Vulcan was still unfamiliar with the God Beast’s technique at the moment, so he was a little worried.

Shoooooc.

“Huk!”

Bam!

“... Kuk.”

Vulcan was surprised by his unnatural movement. He failed at

controlling the distance.

He slammed his head at the stone room's wall and plummeted to the ground. He rubbed his head which turned red.

If someone saw this, Vulcan would have been so embarrassed that he would have kicked the blanket at night for days while grinding his teeth. It was that unsightly.

A sigh naturally came out of Vulcan.

‘Huuuu. As I thought, it is not easy to do as I want. When I saw the Blue Dragon do it, he was able to move over a hundred meters at will...’

The Land-fold technique was far more difficult to use than Vulcan thought. He covered his head with his hands.

He was not expecting to use it masterfully from the very first use. However, he thought he would get accustomed to it with a few tries just like how it went with the Lighting Dragon Step.

The difficulty was at a whole other level. Already, it was giving Vulcan a headache.

However, his useless thoughts did not last long. Vulcan shook up his worries with ease in an instant and got up.

After that, just like how he was five years ago after finishing the conversation with Dokgo Hoo, Vulcan started walking with determination.

From the start, Vulcan was not thinking he could master it over a day.

The God Beast's Land-fold technique, or Destructive Core containing multi-elemental magic, was far from Vulcan's strong suits to start with.

It obviously demanded diligent hard work and bone-smashing training.

‘Still, it would be good for me to set goals even if it is just for motivation purpose.’

In his mind, Vulcan set the goal to five years.

He decided to master the Destructive Core so he could control it at will and bring himself up to the point of being able to utilize the Land-fold technique during real combat within five years.

With those as the goals, Vulcan was going to run while only looking forward.

‘Now that I think about it, it has been a while since I set my goal to be something other than leveling up. Wait, is this the first time?’

Vulcan tilted his head, wondering if that was true. He slowly used the Land-fold to move forward.

Shoooooc.

Shoooooc.

It's been ten years since Vulcan entered the Lava Demon Cave.

After the Destructive Core, Vulcan also acquired the Land-fold, a different, powerful skill.

# Chapter 80 - Giving Without Sparing Anything

---

Five years passed again.

Through those years, Vulcan focused wholeheartedly on training the Destructive Core and Land-fold techniques. He was able to achieve decent results that weren't too shabby.

In particular, for the Destructive Core, from the three years point, he achieved rapid development like a broken dam. Now, Vulcan could cast the Destructive Core as fast as the Ifrit's Fist.

It was still too much for Vulcan to handle many of them at once. However, just one core was substantially more powerful and destructive than the highest level flame magic, so Vulcan didn't have any complaints.

On the flip side, the Land-fold technique still had a long way to go.

The height that Vulcan wanted to reach with the Land-fold was being able to use it reactively and naturally whenever he needed it.

However, at the moment, he could use it only if he focused his mind to the extreme.

In other words, he couldn't say the skill had been properly

melted into his combat style.

‘Of course, even just that significantly boosts my combat potential.’

With the Land-fold technique, Vulcan could dodge the enemy’s most powerful and carefully developed attack, and he could do so without making any preparatory moves.

Also, Vulcan could fiercely counter attack immediately after the Land-fold.

With this pattern alone, he could end battles with ease that would have been difficult otherwise, and he could crush weak opponents even faster.

Vulcan closed his eyes and thought about the battle he just had.

He fought against two of the 800 level Lava Demons at the same time. Despite that, Vulcan maintained the upper hand. Thinking about the battle, he affirmed his resolve.

‘I gained everything I could possibly gain from here. It’s time to challenge the boss room.’

Vulcan’s current level was at 803.

It had been a long time since Vulcan went over the minimum

level requirement required for the boss room.

Vulcan's march toward greater heights entered stagnant period again. He didn't gain many experience points either.

Vulcan no longer had any reason to stay in the Lava Demon Cave.

'I'm not afraid of the Chimera bastards now.'

Step by step, Vulcan cut away the Lava Demons standing in his way toward the boss room and arrived there.

The scenery was about as boring as the entrance of the Lava Cave.

Vulcan thought there would be special engravings just like how it was with the Master Gang-shi. However, there weren't any.

There was just the words 'Repentance Room' in big letters.

'I don't know what he is repenting right now, but he is going to attack me as soon as I enter, so what's the point of this writing?'

Vulcan entered through the door as he thought about that, and he clicked his tongue as if he was disappointed by what came into his view.

‘How come the dungeon room designs are all same?’

Just like the Master Gang-shi’s boss room, the place was a round stone room with Baloc Belgeram in the center. He had huge and tough-looking body with two horns on his head in addition to a pair of wings. The demon looked like the engraving Vulcan saw before. He was greeting Vulcan while in the state of being sealed.

[Baloc Belgeram, the demon duke in middle of reflecting upon his sins]

[Lv850]

The body below his neck was petrified like a gray stone. He was a grand demon. Belgeram slowly opened his mouth with a serious and dignified expression on his face.

- I am Barloc Belgeram, the grand demon from Elumhal, the 429th dimension. My infamy was widely known to the world in that dimension. I was born a treacherous and evil being. I treated life carelessly and...

As Vulcan thought, Belgeram recited the verbose lines of a bad guy just like the Master Gang-shi did.

Vulcan shook his body as if his body was shriveling and clicked his tongue even louder than the last time.



“Tsk. Tsk. Does that guy not get embarrassed from saying those lines?”

Vulcan belittled the demon.

Having heard what Vulcan just said, Belgeram suddenly stopped his speech and talked back to Vulcan with a melancholic look on his face.

- I also know it is tacky... However, it is an important process, so it cannot be helped...

“Uh... uh... I see we can actually communicate. I am... sorry...”

Vulcan never expected that a monster could respond to his words. Vulcan panicked.

At the stir of the moment, Vulcan even conveyed words of apology.

Belgeram silently watched Vulcan do all that. Afterwards, with even sadder look on his face, Belgeram quietly said,

- No. I can see why you would say that... Anyway, if I don't say this to the very end, the seal won't be undone, so... I'll continue, all right?

“Ah... Yes. Please continue.”

- ... I committed all kinds of evil. However, by the guidance of Rumithus, the great god of love, I have come to a profound realization. To repent for my past...

Vulcan tried his hardest to maintain a stoic expression on his face.

He thought it would be terribly rude of him to laugh. However, Vulcan also thought it would be wrong to look at Belgeram with sad, sympathetic face.

So, in order to not show any response, Vulcan repeatedly ticked a blameless piece of rock on the floor.

The situation was that a vicious, flame splashing battle was about to happen in about a minute.

However, Vulcan just could not focus.

- ... However, I cannot turn away a warrior who came all this way through the perilous path to test one's bravery and might. I shall become your opponent willingly.

Finally, the long procedure came to its end, and Baloc Belgeram was released from the seal. He slowly unhinged his body.

Having finished stretching his entire body, from the neck to the tip of his toes, he said with spirited voice,

“I can sense the smell of gods from you... Are you a Demi-god?”

"Ugh... Yes, I am... No. That's right."

Vulcan had been speaking respectfully toward this monster. Having realized this, Vulcan critiqued himself inside and changed the tone.

The whole thing was flowing in a weird direction, but regardless, Vulcan had to fight this demon with his life on the line.

Vulcan thought it would be odd to show any respect.

Belgeram looked at Vulcan with a face that said he didn't care what Vulcan did. Belgeram merely spat out what he wanted to say.

“I see... You must be here to accumulate more exploits.”

‘I am here to beat a quest.’

That's what he was thinking inside, but Vulcan decided to go along with Belgeram.

It was because Belgeram was right to some extent about Vulcan

having come here to accumulate more exploits.

“So, for how long are you just going to talk?”

“Hu... All right. I do not want to fight, but... it is my job, so it cannot be helped.”

It looked like Belgeram really hated doing this. He kept sighing as he summoned a flame whip.

The whip was droopy, and it seemed to be speaking for how Belgeram was feeling.

Vulcan just could not get used to this. He cringed a little.

‘Seriously, how could a demon hate fighting this much? Is he a pacifist?’

Belgeram’s attitude and behavior was making Vulcan look like an unwelcome guest causing ruckus on a peaceful dwelling of a man who was leading a quiet life.

Vulcan felt uncomfortable about this, but he brought out the Thunder God’s Might to burn away his hesitation and took a combat stance.

Pazuzuzuk.

With his entire body wrapped in golden light, Vulcan floated a Destructive Core on the air.

Matching Vulcan's stance, Belgeram also exuded a violent red aura.

Belgeram's right hand, which held the whip, was swung in a large motion.

Kuwaang!

The battle commenced.

\*

Baloc Belgeram really did not want to fight.

4,700 years ago, when he was first dragged here by Rumithus, Belgeram was a grand demon who was mad for slaughter and battle. However, he abandoned almost all of his evil ways. He was on his way to complete his preparation to be reborn.

300 years...

He just needed to withstand 300 more years, and he would have been completely cleansed of his evil. He was going to be sent to the Enlightened World after that, and he was going to be able to spend the days in happy life of tranquility there.

So, when Vulcan, the first guest in a long time, came to visit him, Belgeram's response could only be negative.

He just needed to be here for a while longer, and Belgeram wanted to spend that time peacefully while doing mental training instead.

Belgeram lightly crumpled his face.

‘Huuu. However, while I am in here to repent, I need to do the task I was given. It cannot be helped. The only thing I can do is ending this quickly...’

Belgeram didn't like the idea of taking anyone's life anymore. However, since he absolutely had to do this, he decided to end this quickly, so he used his most powerful techniques from the start.

However...

Kwang Kwang Kwang!

Pupuk!

Vulcan was stopping his incredibly powerful flame magic attacks using one hand with ease.

At the same time, Vulcan pressured Belgeram with his swordplay

and by casting magic simultaneously. It threw Belgeram in confusion.

Boom!

Pazuzuzuzu.

“Uuk!”

Belgeram raised his left hand to stop Vulcan’s Thunder God Blade.

However, because of the lighting that was turning his insides upside down in addition to the stun effects from the lighting shots, Belgeram was not able to move properly.

Using this gap in Belgeram’s defense, Vulcan quickly chained piercing attacks toward Belgeram. Watching Vulcan, Belgeram quickly cast magic.

Kiyaaaaaak!

There were five demons made of flames.

Belgeram poured out hell fire to keep Vulcan in check. He then quickly expanded his distance from Vulcan and swung his whip in a wide motion.

Tearing through the air at a fearsome speed, Belgeram's attack came charging toward Vulcan.

If this was the lower dimension, a strike from Belgeram's whip would have torn the land in half with its incredible destructive power. However, it was not enough to put an end to Vulcan's breathing.

Kwuuuaaang!

Vulcan had a Destructive Core ready and it was quickly launched, hitting the middle of the long whip. The flame whip was not able to withstand the huge impact and its summoning was forcibly disengaged.

Their fight came to a brief moment of exhaustion.

Belgeram, with a surprised face, thought about this as he watched Vulcan.

'I let my guard down too much. I judged him by the appearance when I should not have. To think he is such a strong Demi-god...'

Vulcan's appearance was not becoming of the image of Demi-gods that came to Belgeram's mind. Vulcan's physique was rather lacking, and his face didn't have a striking look either.

Because of that, Belgeram thought Vulcan must be a wishy washy kind of Demi-god.



Usually, most of powerful Demi-gods looked the part.

However, Vulcan's skills completely shattered Belgeram's expectations. Belgeram could not stop being impressed.

“Haha!”

It had been ages since Belgeram felt his blood boil like this.

After several thousand years of repenting and reflections upon his sins, his uncontrollable bloodlust and animosity could be eradicated. However, it seemed his desire for combat still remained.

Belgeram threw away his uninterested attitude from earlier. He instead preemptively used a certain kill move that he was most confident in.

Kwakwang!

Without any hint or predeceasing movements, Baloc Belgeram suddenly charged in.

Combining the power of duke demon's incredible physical specs and explosive reactions from the flame beneath his feet resulted in a fearsome speed.

It was as violent as a giant red-hot cannonball.

That was not the end of it.

Huuuuuuwaaaaak.

Belgeram was engulfed in fire just like how Vulcan was when he achieved SS rank in Fire Mastery.

It was as if the god of fire came down himself. Belegeram's body was overflowing with heat.

Having maximized his firepower to the full potential, he crossed his arms in front of him.

He was going to charge at Vulcan and erase him from existence.

'No matter how strong my resistance is to fire, he won't be able to stop this!'

However, it was not like he could dodge it either.

It was a calculated attack that aimed precisely at a narrow chance.

'If my opponent is letting the guard down even for just a little bit, he wouldn't even be able to react to a certain kill move that came

at him so suddenly like this.'

That's what Belgeram was thinking. However, he was seriously mistaken.

Shooooook.

'What?'

Vulcan disappeared at a blink of an eye.

Not able to respond to it, Belgeram collided into the stone room's wall.

Kuuuwwaaaaaang!

The inside of the stone room was protected by the power of gods and fortified for intense combat. However, it seemed that was not enough to withstand Belgeram's most powerful attack. The wall developed a huge crack and generated dust clouds.

Inside the dust cloud, unable to shake off the shock from the impact, Belgeram was faltering.

A ray of flash fell on Belgeram's neck like the scythe of the grim reaper.

Slice...

“Kuuu.... Huk.”

Belgeram’s head was cut clean. His head rolled on the floor.

However, it seemed the flame of light was not completely extinguished within him.

His face was full of curiosity. Belgeram asked Vulcan,

“How... How could you move like that? By any chance... Land-fold?”

“You recognized it.”

Having heard the answer, Belgeram’s eyes bulged, large enough to almost pop out of his eye sockets.

It was not a petty move like Blink.

Land-fold was the ability that was passed down only to high God Beasts’ lineage or exceptionally talented gods.

However, a mere Demi-god used this highest technique.

Belgeram could not believe it. He mumbled with the look of

disbelief.

“Just how... Even as a Demi-god, this would not be easy to learn... No, even if a Demi-god wanted to, it should not be possible to learn...”

‘A Player can learn it by registering it as a skillbook.’

Vulcan politely answered it inside.

However, he didn’t say it out loud.

Vulcan slowly raised his blade and took a stance to strike down.  
Vulcan said to Belgeram,

“I feel guilty. Even if you died, you are not going to die, right? That is... You will be regenerated, right?”

“... My body is blessed by the highest god. Even if I died, I’ll be revived in a month.”

“That’s good.”

Vulcan threw away his hesitation and quickly swung down his blade.

Belgeram’s head was cut in half, and the sound of notification

echoed in his ears.

[Your experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

[You defeated an opponent who is stronger than you!]

[You achieved an exploit!]

[Your exploit points went up.]

[Hidden Quest – Defeat Baloc Belgeram, the boss monster of Lava Demon Cave, complete!]

[Please select your reward.]

“As always, this is pleasant to hear.”

Vulcan whistled and checked the rewards.

However, as soon as he did, he crumpled his face.

‘Ugh... This hidden quest’s rewards are all terrible...’

The skill was ice type magic, something that was far from his innate type. The items were all weapons.

Vulcan had strengthened the Heavenly Lightning Blade, so he found all of the reward weapons to be lacking.

‘It would have been better if they gave armor instead...’

It could not be helped.

After thinking about it for a while, Vulcan selected ‘A Bag of Vitality Marbles.’

Kwuaaarurururururu.

A mountain of Vitality Marbles piled up. Watching it, Vulcan put up a gloomy face.

He knew that a hidden quest did not always result in a big score. However, he could not help but feel disappointed.

‘Also... If the quest reward itself is lackluster, then I’m afraid the boss monster might drop a lackluster item too...’

Vulcan had a bad feeling about this. He forced himself to suppress it and walked toward the item on the floor.

It was dark red upper body armor. It was exuding dark aura.

Vulcan didn't have high expectations for this item. He checked the item and widened his eyes in surprise.

Dumbfounded, he mumbled by himself.

[Legendary Armor (Set Item) – Duke Demon's Upper Body Armor]

[Level Limit: 800Lv]

[Mastery Limit: SS rank in Fire Mastery or higher]

Defensive power + 1087

Fire type resistance + 10%

Fire type skill's attack power + 5%

\*This armor is said to have been worn by an ancient great demon when he invaded the humanity. It demonstrates tough defensive power and fire resistance. Using just one of the armors by itself is not as powerful as another legendary armor, but when all five armors in the set are collected and worn together, the combined effect is quite superb.



“... Set items?”

# Chapter 81 - Giving Without Sparing Anything (2)

---

Vulcan panicked after seeing a set item, which was something he had never seen in his life.

He had been obtaining a countless number of items from cutting down monsters for decades in Rubel Continent, Beloong City, and now Act 2.

However, this was the first time for Vulcan to learn that such items existed.

‘Of course, the concept is common, but...’

The idea was common in video games. Vulcan just thought such a concept didn’t exist in this world.

“...”

For a moment, Vulcan looked at ‘Demon Duke’s Upper Body Armor’ and slowly unequipped the armor he was wearing.

He put away his old armor into the inventory haphazardly. Overjoyed, he tried on the Demon Duke’s armor.

He couldn’t possibility not be happy about this.

It was a high level armor, possessing 800 Level limit. Also, its options were not bad in itself.

In particular, Vulcan really liked the ‘increases fire type skills’ attack power’ option.

Vulcan tried out a variety of different fire magic and confirmed their power definitely had gone up. He grinned widely and thought about his next plan.

‘My initial plan was to get out of the Lava Cave after completing the quest, but...’

It was not that the experience points didn’t go up by hunting here, but the place was slowly approaching the point where the efficiency was about to fall behind ordinary hunting grounds outside.

Vulcan thought he could handle the Chimeras to some extent now, so he had been thinking that he should leave the Lava Cave as soon as he clears the boss room.

However, now that he discovered the existence of set items for the first time, and moreover, considering that he could expect a huge increase in effectiveness from collecting them all, greed started to fire up inside Vulcan.

‘Judging from the item’s name, it looks like it is not the kind of

equipment that I could get from the outside. If I kill the boss monster after he gets regenerated, are the set items going to continue to drop?’

It was not something he could be sure about unless he tried.

However, it seemed there was a high likelihood of this being true.

Vulcan checked out the dark red armor that was covering his body for a while. In the end, he decided to extend his stay at the Lava Cave.

Actually, Vulcan didn’t really like the armors he had been wearing.

They were grand-rate armors. They were not bad, but they all had options far from what he wanted.

On top of this, their designs were all different from each other, so they didn’t look very good together.

‘This Demon Duke Set... Judging from the armor’s option, it is definitely specialized in fire magic. I must collect them all before leaving no matter what. That’s definitely the right move.’

Vulcan was painfully aware of how difficult it was to acquire high level items that were perfect fit for him, so he thought he definitely should grab this chance.

Kiiiiic.

Vulcan opened the repent room's creaky door and headed back to where the Lava Demon Forces were.

It was going to take a month before Baloc Balgeram was regenerated.

Vulcan couldn't afford to just play around and do nothing for the time being.

Vulcan diligently trained in Land Fold technique and collected Vitality Marbles while passing the time.

Like that, when exactly one month had passed, Vulcan went back to the repentance room where Belgeram was sealed in. Vulcan kicked opened the door.

- I am Baloc Balgeram, the grand demon from Elumhal, the 429th dimension. I had my infamy known to the world in... What the hell? Why are you back again!

Belgeram panicked. He even stopped his important procedure and blurted at Vulcan as if he was making a complaint.

Toward Belgeram, Vulcan responded as if it was nothing.

“Don’t mind it. Just hurry up and finish what you had been doing.”

• ...

Belgeram stared at Vulcan as if he could not believe this was happening. However, Vulcan just stood there with his arms crossed and watched Belgeram.

Belgeram was really not liking what Vulcan was doing.

However, there was nothing he could do. Belgeram slowly continued his line.

• ... However, I cannot turn away a warrior who came all this way through the perilous path to test one’s bravery and might. I shall become your opponent willingly.

With bitter look on his face, Belgeram completed the process.

The Destructive Core fell on the back of his head. At the same time, Vulcan also rushed toward Belgeram at a fearsome speed.

The blade that Vulcan held was exuding the violent energy of golden lightning.

• Sone of a beeeaaach!

Belgeram hurriedly swung his flame whip and shot down the Destructive Core. He then extended his left hand to summon demons.

Dozens of demons were burning up in dark red flames.

They possessed incredible heat and destructive power. They could be called the ultimate fire magic.

However, in addition to the SS rank fire mastery, Vulcan was also wearing the Demon Duke's Armor. The summoned demons were not enough to corner Vulcan.

Vulcan repeatedly launched Ifrit's Fists and neutralized the summoned demons. As sharp as an ice pick, Vulcan charged into pierce Belgeram's stomach.

- Kuk!

Belying his huge body, Belgeram demonstrated incredible speed and flexibility to dodge Vulcan's blade.

However, this was only the start of the battle.

Several hundreds of lightning attacks pestered Belgeram like a swarm of bees. The Destructive Core floating above his head was intently waiting for a gap in his defense.

Moreover, Vulcan was occasionally attacking using the Land Fold technique, attacking Belgeram's rear and sides. They were enough to keep Belgeram busy.

Of course, Belgeram's attacks were also deadly and sharp.

He had superb physical abilities, endless mana, and explosive dashing capability.

He was definitely not someone that one should fight with their guard down. He was definitely a difficult opponent.

However, Vulcan already had beaten him a month ago even without the armor.

Belgeram gradually accumulated damage over time and started to collapse. His neck was cut again. He ended up in the sorry state again where he was looking up at Vulcan from the floor.

Belgeram asked as if he was wronged.

- Just why!

“ ... ”

- Just why are you tormenting me again! If it is the exploit that you want, you already obtained it, didn't you? You should not be able to get it again from killing me again. Please. Can you leave me



be so I can quietly repent for my past sins?

With sympathetic look on his face, Vulcan looked at Belgeram's head.

The look on Vulcan's face at least looked like he was going to comply to Belgeram's request.

However...

Pazuzuzzuzuk.

- .... This son of a bitch!

Slice...

Like a fully ripe water melon, Belgeram's head was cut cleanly in half.

This was his second death at Vulcan's hands.

[Your experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

[You defeated a foe who is stronger than you!]

[You have defeated this monster before, so you cannot gain exploits.]

‘My exploits really didn't increase. Of course, I didn't kill him for getting more exploits, but...’

Vulcan looked at Belgeram's corpse which was slowly disappearing.

Soon, dark red boots appeared in mid-air.

Its ominous look was accentuated with skulls and demon decorations. Vulcan cheered out loud.

“I scored big on items twice in a row! All right!”

To save his world, he had fought through unspeakable hardship and suffocating pressure.

However, just for this moment, Vulcan laid down all of his worries and enjoyed it like a gamer in a virtual reality game.

\*

Ten years have passed.

Vulcan's sense of joy from scoring big did not last.

He was able to get the items he wanted only after a very long time.

He hunted the boss monster 120 times, and he obtained items for those 120 times.

He was able to get items belonging to the Demon Duke's Armors set during 1st, 2nd, 23rd, 44th, 76th, 101st, and 111th attempts.

However, the crumpled look on Vulcan's face didn't know to relax.

There were three pairs of boots with exactly same color and design in front of him.

Including the Demon Duke's Boots that he was wearing already, there were four of the same pairs.

Excluding duplicate items, Vulcan just had four of the set items.

Vulcan's inside was boiling out of frustration. He consoled himself as he put away the boots.

After that, he stated to use harsh languages inside.

“... Fuck. After all that hard work for ten years... In the end, I didn't get the set... The helm... I just need the helm...”

The set item's power could be realized only after collecting all five items.

Having just four or three of them didn't matter.

Of course, each items had useful fire related options, so this was not bad, but Vulcan could not feel great after having spent so much time and still be unable to accomplish his goal.

‘No... You never know. It might really work this time...’

Just once more, just once more... Vulcan was thinking like a gambling addict who shouted that. Vulcan walked toward the repent room with heavy steps.

With a look on the face that seemed he was at the brink of exploding from the stress, he kicked open the door such that it resulted in a loud banging noise.

Baloc Belgeram, who Vulcan was sick of seeing, could be seen.

• ...

Belgeram didn't say anything.

When Vulcan came for around the 50th time, Belgeram cursed and pleaded Vulcan to not to come. However, Belgeram now knew that it was no use.

- I, am, Baloc, Balgeram, the, grand, demon, from, Elumhal, the, 4, 2, 9th dimension...

Belgeram performed the process at an incredibly slow speed.

He had no way of harassing Vulcan in the battle that was about to happen, so he was trying to do it this way.

Of course, as a result of his attempt, Belgeram was met with even more horrible deaths many times. However, Belgeram felt that he would explode from frustration if he didn't.

- ... who, have, come, to, test...

However, when there was a beginning, there had to be an end.

The procedure, which was progressing very slowly, came to its end. With gloomy face, Belgeram summoned his flame whip. Vulcan said,

“I am not coming here anymore.”

- What!

Shocked, Belgeram yelled loudly.

He was so shocked that his flame whip vanished into the air.

Not concerned at all about Belgeram's reaction, Vulcan continued with uninterested voice.

“It will be difficult to stay here any longer. I had been eating my food sparingly, but I ate all of it... I need to leave now.”

• ...

In silence, Belgeram glared at Vulcan.

Belgeram was no longer interested in knowing what was the story behind Vulcan.

Belgeram was not interested in Vulcan's constantly changing equipment or rapidly developing skills.

He didn't want to have a conversation with Vulcan. Belgeram actually wanted to just present his neck out and end the fight quickly. However, unfortunately, that was not possible.

It was because Belgeram had the responsibility of carrying out the task given by the god diligently.

‘Anyway, after this fight is over, I don’t need to be harassed by him anymore; that’s what he is saying, right?’

Belgeram smiled widely and started the fight with his most powerful technique.

It was even quicker and sudden than how it was during the very first battle against Vulcan. It was dealt smoothly.

However, Vulcan was already at level 820.

Also, he now could use the Land Fold with even more ease than ten years ago.

Shoooooc.

Vulcan easily dodged the attack. He used the Thunder God Blade and Destructive Core techniques and pushed back intensely.

After that, the situation, the kind that looked exactly the same as if it was produced out of a waffle machine, unfolded. Belgeram was pushed back continuously due to the flow of the battle. He gradually accumulated damage. In the end, he was struck by a fatal move and died.

Chooooooooaaaak.

---

[Your experience points went up.]

[Level up!]

[You defeated an opponent who is stronger than you!]

[You have defeated this monster before, so you cannot gain exploits.]

Instead of cutting off Belgeram's head, Vulcan cut clean his entire body in half starting from the top of the head to the end of the upper body.

Belgeram disappeared without even being able to scream. Vulcan watched him disappear and then cursed.

“... Fuck.”

The item that Belgeram tossed out at the end was a part of Demon Duke's Armor set that Vulcan desperately wanted.

However, it was another pair of boots.

Vulcan was mad to the tip of his head. He threw a violent tantrum.



“UUUUUUUAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!”

KWANG KWANG BOOM KWABOOBM BAKBOKAKWK.

Vulcan launched several hundreds of Hellfires to all directions.

The explosive sound was beyond just deafening. It was to the point of making his ear drums burst. However, Vulcan didn't stop his magic attacks.

‘Ugh... Fuck. I grinded for 10 years, yet...’

Of course, he didn't just grind the boss fights for ten years. He had done leveling up and training diligently, so the time spent was meaningful. However, Vulcan didn't remember any of that at the moment.

He just thought about the helm, the thing that he so desperately wanted. The helm was the only thing that was filling his head at the moment, and it was not going to go away.

Again, full of anguish, Vulcan screamed out loud.

“KUUUUUUUUUUAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!”

Like that, Vulcan ran amok like a madman for a long time. He stopped shooting magic indiscriminately when he heard the sound of hunger coming from his belly.

After that, he plummeted to the ground. Vulcan lied on the floor with all of his arms and legs stretched out like a starfish.

“ ... ”

He ate the very last piece of bread that he had in the inventory and lied there for a long time.

In bitter voice, he mumbled alone.

“... Now... I should get out of here...”

It had been 25 years since he started training at the Lava Cave.

Vulcan finally got to go outside.

# Chapter 82 - Fireflies (1)

---

Puk!

“It’s over!”

A man in red martial warrior suit pierced through a giant Hellfire Lizard.

The man was in shambles. He had burn wounds here and there which appeared to be from the Hellfire Lizard’s flame attack. However, his eyes were shining vividly.

The man’s arm was thrust into the lizard almost to his shoulder. A huge amount of energy was discharged from his arm.

Kuuuuuuuaaaa.

Feeling the danger, the lizard rolled on the ground to crush the man. However, that was not enough to destroy several tens of protective energy layers.

Soon, his energy penetrated deep into the lizard’s body and pounded at its heart. The Hellfire Lizard coughed blood from its mouth like a waterfall and met its end.

“Kuuuk. Huk. Kuuuhuk.”

The man in red warrior suit won.

However, he was drenched in blood and had numerous burn marks. His clothes looked like a rag. Hence, he currently didn't have the dignified look of a victor.

In fact, his legs were faltering because he didn't even have any strength left to stand.

Han Surl-hye, a yin yang elemental enchantress, giggled and laughed at him.

“You fool. You are fighting just a lizard, yet you are using all of your strength and then some, including the strength you had to suck on your mommy's milk. Would you like me to lend you my chest?”

“Shut up! Ugh. Huuuk. You bitch. The elemental type put me at a disadvantage, that's all!”

“Hoho. Putting up an excuse like that, you look like a brat. Why don't you come here and be embraced in the bosom of a lady?”

“That foolish lass.”

Somehow, it had been 200 years since they had been traveling together. However, her way of talking, which turned one's mind upside down, never changed with the passage of time.

Dan Uu-san, a vampire demon, spat on the ground and focused his mind.

The lizard's blood slowly got sucked into the man's hand.

Chuuururururururup.

Dan Uu-san evaporated unnecessary moisture from the blood and absorbed only the vitality from the blood.

By his specialty, blood absorption, the Hellfire Lizard's corpse shrank like a balloon that lost air. Soon, it became worse than a dried-up mummy.

Dan Uu-san was completely recovered from all wounds. He then kicked the lizard's corpse, which only had the skin left.

Bam.

Puuurrrssusususk.

The corpse suddenly became dust like a dry sand castle and got swept away in the wind.

Dan Uu-san cursed out of frustration.

“Fuck. I beat the shit out of that fucker, yet all I got is a chicken feed that a beggar on a market would have gotten. Damn it.”

“What’s there to complain about? You are steadily growing.”

Han Surl-hye smiled brightly and consoled him.

However, Dan Uu-san screamed in anger.

“Steadily? Do dogs have horns... Fuck. Does this look like growth to your eyeballs?”

“Even if it is the size of a rat’s tail, growth is growth. Look at me. It’s been 150 years since I had been stuck behind a wall.”

She was talking about something incredibly frustrating and discouraging, yet the smile on her face didn’t leave her.

Dan Uu-san watched the look on her face and shook his head left and right.

“Did that lass just give up completely or is she insane? No, was she always insane?’

He had no way of knowing.

With angry look on his face, the man looked at her. He then

suddenly turned his head away and made a passing remark.

The tone also had a bit of disappointment mixed in.

“If I could catch that bastard Vulcan, then I’ll be able to have a rapid growth too.”

“Oh hoho. Are you confident about it? That bastard is incredibly strong, you know?”

Having heard her provocative words, Dan Uu-san crumpled his face big time.

However, to say ‘Of course! I can win no matter what he throws at me!’, he had quite a few things coming to his mind that made him feel uneasy.

‘According to the information by the Bae Su Jin, this guy killed these tough monsters with ease... Kuuuk.’

Although Dan Uu-san’s specialty was fight to the death duel against another martial warrior, not monsters like this Hellfire Lizard, he couldn’t place himself above Vulcan even with that under consideration.

He knew well what that lass, who had terrible personality, was going to say. It was as obvious as what would happen to a fire.

“... If you fight with me against him, it will not be a problem...”

“Ho ho ho. As I thought, you can’t do anything without me?”

“Ugh, shut up! Seriously!”

“Hahahahaha!”

It was not certain what she found so amusing. Han Surl-hye tilted her head toward the sky and laughed out loud.

Dan Uu-san’s face started to rot from watching her, but she didn’t care one bit.

Holding her stomach, she laughed for a while longer, but she suddenly stopped laughing.

After that, with disappointed look on her face, she said to him,

“However, it’s been 20 years since that guy disappeared. He probably escaped to somewhere else.”

“... No. It’s very likely he is here.”

“Based on what? There is nothing, right?”

“The return scroll had been blocked. The members of Bae Su Jin



had been keeping watch here regularly. Vulcan had no way of escaping here.”

“Um... I think he probably escaped already through a secret passage...”

Han Surl-hye talked in pessimistic attitude.

She held her chin with her hand and put up rather exaggerated gloomy look on her face.

Her behavior was turning things upside down in Dan Uu-san. However, deep down, Dan Uu-san also had given up actually.

‘I had been hanging around here because it was quite suitable for training, but... Honestly, I think it is about time we call it quit. Ugh. As that lass said, should we really leave here?’

Dan Uu-san agonized over it hard.

It had been 25 years since Vulcan disappeared without a trace.

When the main force of the Bae Su Jin came back empty handed, their leader scolded them harshly. Their leader then inquired the Oracle on two things.

First one was about the killer who slaughtered the horse-faced and one-eyed. The second one was about Vulcan’s location.

To start with the result, Bae Su Jin was currently mad to the core due to utter lack of progress on both matters.

First, regarding the mystery assailant, the problem was that they could not do anything even though they had the information.

According to the Oracle's information, it was Fowaru, the one who ran the general store at the Espo City.

Fowaru was the man who reached incredible heights on both magic and physical techniques. His abilities far surpassed the leader of the Bae Su Jin.

Moreover, ever since the incident, Fowaru had never set foot outside of the Espo City.

Bae Su Jin may be an organization who have gone far, very far, but they could not afford to cause ruckus in Espo City, which was a place protected by many Gods. They had no choice but to hold down their anger in tears.

As for the second matter, the location of Vulcan, which was far more important than Forwaru in several ten folds, there weren't any information at all.

Oracle was an organization that knew most of activities happening in Act 2. However, even this organization raised the white flag on this assignment.

Vulcan suddenly disappeared as if he went to a different dimension. Even Madorugi, the leader of Oracle, panicked a lot. He delivered a message to the Bae Su Jin, apologizing for not being able to complete the client's inquiry.

However, the Oracle said that they were confident that Vulcan was alive and had not been caught by anyone. Because of this, Bae Su Jin could not give up either.

So, Bae Su Jin scattered their members around in search of Vulcan. Eventually, it led to putting up a bounty on Vulcan.

‘Bae Su Jin will give body modifications to anyone who hands this man to us! Just catch him and bring him to us! We swear to god that we will hold up our end of the bargain!’

The body modification performed by the special technique of Rex Ruvero, the leader of Bae Su Jin...

It was one of few safe procedures by the Bae Su Jin. It made a martial warrior's body to be even more compatible with the martial techniques. It made a mage's body to be more compatible with magic power.

The procedure required all sorts of precious materials, so only extreme few within Bae Su Jin had received this procedure. It was a very valuable procedure.

With that as the reward for the bounty, countless human mages and martial warriors looked around in search for Vulcan. They had lights on their eyes.

The Lava Field where Vulcan was last sighted was an obvious place for people to swarm in to search. People also swarmed to search hunting grounds nearby. They searched pathways, temporary residences and all areas they thought he might be at. All of famous low lives of Act 2 gathered in those places to find Vulcan.

People died in truck loads from getting into arguments with each other in the process. However, all this lasted only up to 10 years.

Despite all of their efforts, they couldn't find any lead.

It was as if Vulcan disappeared into the ground. He was gone without any hint as to where he went.

One by one, people grew tired and gave up. Now, over 20 years later, Dan Uu-san the vampire and Han Surl-hye the enchantress were of the extreme few who still lingered around the Lava Field.

‘Even the Bae Su Jin is starting to divert their people away from this search, so... I guess that’s that.’

Actually, Dan Uu-san held out this long because of his anxiety.

He felt desperate. He was facing fear about being stuck at where he was forever, never being able to advance further. Hoping for a

big score, he charged into this search. Now, unable to throw away his pipe dream, he missed the time when he should have exited from this futile search.

‘Hu... I should have got out of this when other guys washed their hands 15 years ago...’

Dan Uu-san sighed in regret.

Watching him from the side, Han Surl-hye said,

“Retard. Stop dreaming. Let’s leave this place.”

“Hey, this lunatic bitch... Are you going to keep pissing me off to the end!”

Dan Uu-san was infuriated. He raised his energy like a storm.

His clothes were waving fiercely as if they were going to be torn apart. Small pebbles around him were unable to withstand his energy. The stones became dust and scattered.

However, Han Surl-hye, the one who was facing this intense burst of energy head on, looked relaxed as if she had lots of margins to spare.

She was looking at him with intrigued look on her face. It was like a girl watching a nephew doing something cute. Having

noticed how Han Surl-hye was reacting, Dan Uu-san withdrew his energy.

He was not confident about beating her.

‘Bitch... She is still half a step ahead of me.’

He thought he caught up quite a bit in the past 200 years. However, he was still far behind.

He felt humiliated, and it was filling up inside slowly. To hide what he was feeling, he cursed at her in loud voice.

“Retard! Only if that son of a bitch Vulcan dropped from the sky!”

“You must be very embarrassed? It’s all right, you don’t have to feel that way.”

“Hey, just leave me alone! I got it! Let’s go! I am sick of this place. I don’t want to stay here anymore!”

“Hm. Why didn’t you say so earlier.”

Han Surl-hye finally got the declaration of surrender from Dan Uu-san.

She licked her red lips with her tongue and smiled seductively.

She actually had folded her hopes in finding Vulcan 10 years ago.

She chose to stick around at this place because Dan Uu-san was being stubborn. However, her heart was no longer in it for the search. Having him say that he was giving up the search made her feel very good.

To leave the place before Dan Uu-san changes his mind, she started to operate her internal energy.

It was at that time...

Uuuuuuung.

Crack!

They felt the ground shaking, and the ground suddenly got split open.

It was as if the ground was torn by invisible hands.

The earthquake stopped after a while, and what appeared to be an entrance to hell revealed itself in front of them.

From the place, incredibly hot and evil energy was coming out,

the kind that ordinary people would not be able to handle.

Dan Uu-san and Han Surl-hye exchanged gazes.

They quickly approached the front of what appeared to be an entrance.

Han Surl-hye, with a little excited look on her face, said,

“What is this? Could it be?”

“Wait, just hold still for a bit. Hide our presence for now.”

The two hid themselves behind a large rock that got made as result of the earthquake.

They held their breath and watched the gap.

This was a strange event that could never happen under ordinary circumstances.

They spent almost a thousand years in Act 2. However, they never once heard about earthquake happening at the Lava Field.

However, even if it was not due to natural earthquake, there were a few times when the ground shook. One thing zapped through Dan Uu-san’s mind.



“Secret cave...!”

Such things were discovered in incredibly rare occasions.

Caves like that usually had horrifying monsters lurking around, so most people avoided such places other than Demi-gods and training maniacs.

However, if someone was to spend the time in such a cave without opening the gate to the inside, no other place was safer than the cave. This fact was known.

In other words, secret caves were perfect for safe hideouts.

‘This is also my first time to see one, but... That’s not important.’

Dan Uu-san’s eyes gleamed. His gaze contained excitement, anticipation, and thrill. He glared at the secret cave.

Step... step...

Steps could be heard a little.

A human like figure could be seen.

Dan Uu-san stopped breathing and watched what was walking

out of the place.

Dan Uu-san's head was filled with just one thought.

‘Please... Please, let that bastard be Vulcan. Please!’

Soon, the mysterious being stepped completely into the open.

He was wearing ominous looking dark-red equipment, and he had a blade on his left waist which exuded holy sensation.

He had black hair, copper skin, and blurry look on his face. He was a young man in 20s.

His face looked exactly like the one in the bounty.

Having confirmed it, Dan Uu-san and Han Surl-hye put up shady smiles.

‘We found him!’

They were thankful for the huge luck that fell on them. They minimized their presence as much as possible.

After that, they looked at each other once.

They had been together for 200 years.

They didn't even need to make plans through telepathic communication.

Just like before, when Dan Uu-san charges in violently, Han Surl-hye just needed to sneak behind and shoot paralysis attack.

‘Even if you are the best of the best, you are just a guy who had been playing in the Lava Field. You probably cannot dodge an enchantress’ paralysis.’

Thinking that, Dan Uu-san was preparing himself for the attack.

Meanwhile, despite having felt the fresh air outside the cave after decades, Vulcan had a look on his face as if he just chewed on poop.

There were two people behind the boulder, hiding.

They were bugging Vulcan.

‘What are those people doing there in hiding?’

Vulcan returned 25 years later after powering up significantly.

The two were seriously lacking in abilities to hide their presence from Vulcan’s senses.

## Chapter 83 - Fireflies (2)

---

They held their breath, killed their presence, and even hid their notoriously ferocious energy, but it was no use.

Vulcan had been repeating battle after battle for the past decades.

He was currently like a magnificent blade that was sharpened to perfection by a master blacksmith.

Even among the Demi-gods, only few would have been able to sneak up on Vulcan without being caught by his senses.

Moreover, the two hiding behind the bolder right now were at heights that were very lacking in comparison to Vulcan's power. Hence, although unknown to them, the very idea of ambush was not actually possible to begin with.

Of course, that was if they did attack Vulcan.

Vulcan was suspicious of the two, but he soon shook off the thought.

‘By any chance, are they targeting me? Nah... Probably not.

They have no reason to.

It's not like I had been going all over the places and causing

troubles. I had been at hunting grounds and leveling up diligently.

Moreover, for the past 25 years, I just stayed deep underground and hung out with demon bastards.

Only ones I interacted throughout the time were Dokgo Hoo and the Blue Dragon.

I never had chance to cause badblood with anyone.'

Vulcan peeked a smile.

'I guess I am just on the edge.'

That was understandable.

Vulcan grinded for 10 years in attempt to obtain the 'Duke Demon Set,' which were legendary items.

However, despite the effort, Vulcan didn't get what he wanted in the end.

He was currently in a state where he was going to react sensitively toward anything.

'The land suddenly cracked open, and some dark bastard jumped out of it, so they are probably just being cautious. I should stop

minding them and just enjoy the fresh air.'

Vulcan lightened up his hardened face. It had been a while since he got to breath fresh air. He took a deep breath in. He then looked at the bright sunshine as he smiled pleasantly.

For a very long time, he had been at a creepy and dark place, so just those were enough to make him feel better instantly.

It felt like his body was being cleansed.

Like that, Vulcan enjoyed warm sunlight for a moment longer. He then bent his upper body to do some stretching.

It was at that moment. Dan Uu-san, who had been waiting for the right moment, charged in toward Vulcan like an arrow that was shot from the bow.

Chupat!

Huuuooooong.

His hands were full of highly concentrated Su-ra Blood Art energy gushing like twisters.

The energy felt violent as if merely being grazed by it would lead to one's existence being erased.

The intensity was the kind that even skilled warriors in Act 2 would shy away from facing. The speed was also incredible. An opponent of equal strength would have lost his life before even having the chance to get ready.

However, this was not to the point where Vulcan couldn't react to it.

Wheeeec.

Vulcan quickly raised his head.

His eyes looked annoyed. Facing Vulcan's gaze, Dan Uu-san felt his heart sink.

'Unbelievable. He responded ridiculously fast.'

Actually, although Dan Uu-san's art was destructive, it was far from being stealthy, so it was not suitable for assassination.

However, at the moment, Vulcan's body was unstable and full of gaps in defense.

He was bending down and looking down. He didn't even have his sword drawn. Dan Uu-san thought he could at least land one strike against Vulcan.

However, the bastard assumed defense stance a lot quickly. That

made Dan Uu-san feel uneasy and worry if Vulcan was at a height that was even higher than what he assumed.

‘... Even so, my attack is nothing but a feint move!’

Dan Uu-san ground his teeth hard, enough to make cracking noise, and focused on his role.

His role was distracting Vulcan as much as possible so he would not notice Han Surl-hye the ying-yang elemental enchantress’ paralysis attack.

To that end, he used hundred armed su-ra blood palm technique, one of the most chaotic and flashy feint move he had, to pressure in Vulcan.

Whuuuuuuuuuuuak.

108 bloody palms completely filled the space.

Each and every palm possessed horrifying intensity. The attack looked very dangerous.

Moreover, one could not tell a feint move from a real attack just from looking at the appearance of the move, so this was perfect for drawing the opponent’s attention.

However, Vulcan, the one who was facing the attack, looked very



relaxed with much margin to spare.

He didn't even have an ounce of nervousness in him. Dan Uu-san wondered if a tiger facing off against a puppy would look like this.

Dan Uu-san saw that Vulcan had angry look on his face. However, even that felt like it was just out of being annoyed for having had to deal with patsy and useless problem. Vulcan was not having a hard time blocking the attack.

Watching Vulcan being like this made Dan Uu-san very upset.

Vulcan was haphazardly responding to Dan Uu-san's attack as if Vulcan was thinking Dan Uu-san's attack lacked the power. It made Dan Uu-san suddenly feel intense desire to kill Vulcan.

'That son of a bitch... You think I'm a pushover, is that it?'

Vampire demon Dan Uu-san suddenly thought about his past.

With the duel as an excuse, the Demi-god Tolkas beat the crap out of him, saying he is doing this for the sake of cleansing Dan Uu-san's evil heart.

Dan Uu-san wholeheartedly threw Su-Ra Blood Art techniques at Tolkas, and Tolkas leisurely parried them all one blow at a time. That bastard Tolkas' behavior back then was overlapping with how Vulcan was handling the attacks now. Also, the thought was rotting away at his pride even more.

However, the situation now was completely different from back then.

On Dan Uu-san's crumpled face, there was faint smile overlaid.

'That's right. Keep letting your guard down like that.'

The full extent of his role was just drawing attention.

The real attack was, while this bastard was exchanging strikes with him, going to come in stealth from an angle that he never even dreamed of.

Dan Uu-san, with his face full of malicious intent, continued his feint attack.

Soon, the enchantress' paralysis attack was going to ambush Vulcan.

That surreptitious and fatal move was going to suppress the entire blood stream throughout Vulcan's body. Hoping for this outcome, Dan Uu-san focused even more on his palm attacks.

However, the situation didn't flow smoothly as he hoped.

Shooooook.

‘What the?’

As if Vulcan was never there in the first place, he disappeared. That threw Dan Uu-san into chaos.

‘He suddenly disappeared when he was right in front of my eyes?!’

Absolutely surprised, Dan Uu-san quickly stopped his body from leaning forward.

His eyes could not be opened any bigger than they were at the moment.

‘Just what was that? It wasn’t even blink?!’

Dan Uu-san had lived for a very long time, long enough to see rise and fall of several dynasties.

Throughout the time, he had countless experiences in battling against mages. He had seen mages using magic to teleport numerous times.

Therefore, he was certain about this.

The technique that he just saw was at a whole another dimension from that kind of petty moves.

The unique sensation of the mana being focused, no, to be precise, Vulcan disappeared before Dan Uu-san felt any sign.

It was shocking. It was sending chill down his spines.

“Kiiiiiaaaaaaaak!”

Dan Uu-san’s head turn rapidly, enough to bend the neck.

He could see that Vulcan already was standing behind Han Surl-hye.

With his eyes open wide and strained, Dan Uu-san glared toward a place.

A black gauntlet with demon shaped engraving, that rough and powerful hand was holding Han Surl-hye’s fragile neck.

“Let go of that hand! You son of a bitch!”

Engulfed in fury, Dan Uu-san was exploding with power beyond his normal capacity.

Because of his energy, his clothes waved violently as if they were going to be torn apart.

With his eyes completely red, Dan Uu-san glared at Vulcan and roared,

“You piece of garbage! Chewing you off to pieces won’t be enough! Unhand her now!”

Because of his agitated heart, his voice was torn. Dan Uu-san’s voice pierced into Vulcan’s ears.

Listening to the man’s desperate roar, Vulcan stared at Dan Uu-san as if he was dumbfounded.

‘What the hell. Where did this piece of X show up?’

Vulcan was so stunned that he couldn’t even find any words to say.

It was Dan Uu-san who charged in and poured out attacks first, not himself.

Vulcan came out to feel the fresh air outside after 25 years and was doing some stretching. He merely neutralized the woman in front of him in self-defense.

Vulcan thought he should be the one to be angry, not Dan Uu-san.

Vulcan casually turned his head and checked the woman’s face

and then looked at the man's face.

He wondered if he knew these people, but that was not the case. He had never seen them in his life.

Vulcan used the SYSTEM and checked the information on them.

[Dan Uu-san, Vampire Demon]

[755Lv]

[Han Surl-hye, Ying-Yang Elemental Enchantress]

[798Lv]

‘I knew it! I’ve never met these guys before! These bastard and bitch...!’

Vulcan had never seen such names or titles.

Having confirmed this far, Vulcan's face crumpled to no end.

He felt so wronged. He even felt tears forming on his eyes for a brief moment. He was in middle of an intense battle until just a moment ago, but Vulcan could not control his emotion.

‘Why! Just why!’

Vulcan wondered why everyone in Act 2 were so eager to hurt him.

To avoid what happened in Act 1, Vulcan had been avoiding anything and everything that could lead to troubles. Like a Buddhist temple monk, Vulcan had been staying only in hunting grounds and training for level ups.

However, despite his efforts, these lunatics showed no hesitation on using deadly moves on someone they had never met in person before. As if that was not horrible enough, one of them was screaming at him like there was no tomorrow.

In that instant, Vulcan’s emotion turned violent. His hand which was holding the enchantress’ neck was tightening with incredible strength.

“Kuuu.... Huk!”

Because of his incredible grappling strength at 820 level, she was screaming in pain.

The enchantress was a powerful warrior. She would not have been shunned as a novice by anyone anywhere. However, in comparison to Vulcan, she was significantly lacking. Right now, she was even neutralized by him.

There was a limit to holding out using protective energy layers.

‘N....O.... He is intending to kill me!’

It felt like her neck was about to break. The pain was unspeakable. She was being overwhelmed with the fear that she might die at this rate.

Her fear made her move.

She used all of her strength and operated her internal energy.

Whoooooooooung.

Using the body’s center as the line, she poured out extreme ying energy on the left and extreme yang energy on her right.

She maximized her ying yang energy art and pulled both of her arms back.

She was going to collide her two fists and destroy the wrist on Vulcan’s hand that was holding her neck.

Vulcan was distracted by his own gloomy thoughts at the moment. He then panicked after seeing her move.



‘How stupid. I let my guard down in middle of the battle!’

Vulcan criticized himself severely.

However, it was not going to lead to putting him in danger.

There was a significant gap in their abilities to begin with. Also, Vulcan was currently holding the enchantress at her critical point.

Vulcan instantly raised his mana and cast Ifrit’s Fist with the hand that he was using to hold her neck from the back. Han Surl-hye the enchantress lost her life before she had the chance to fully swing her hands.

Pwhuuuuuuwwaaaaak.

Thump...

With the head now lost, the enchantress collapsed like a kite that lost the string.

Dan Uu-san stared vacantly and shouted in fury.

“You son of a bitch!”

Shedding tears of blood, Dan Uu-san charged toward Vulcan.

Vulcan realized the man looked seriously agitated as if he just lost his wife. Vulcan put up a bitter look on his face.

‘Were they married? Ugh... They are the ones who are at fault here, but why do I feel so dirty?’

Vulcan calmly looked at Dan Uu-san who lost his mind.

He had himself surrounded by Su-Ra Blood Energy that was far thicker than what he had earlier.

He was far exceeding the power that could be demonstrated by a martial warrior of 750 level.

‘He poured in all of his life force.’

To martial worriers, the life force was more precious than their own life, yet Dan Uu-san was using all of it. Watching the situation unfold made Vulcan feel like he could mistake himself as a super villain.

Of course, Vulcan was not a villain. He also had no intention of meeting a villain’s archetypical end.

Pazut!

Slice.

Vulcan, in an instant, drew his blade from his sheath.

His Heavenly Lightning Blade, which was fully loaded with golden energy of the Thunder God Blade technique, diagonally cut through Dan Uu-san's body. Dan Uu-san lost his life before he even had a chance to put up a fight.

Thump.

Tsuuuuwaaaaaaaak.

Dan Uu-san's corpse collapsed lifelessly. Blood and organs poured out of the body.

Watching that horrible sight, Vulcan had displeased look on his face as he put the blade back.

Chulkuk.

The sound of his blade being placed back in the sheath was far rougher than usual. The sound spoke for how he felt at the moment.

Concerned that he might establish badblood with others that knew these people, Vulcan used fire magic to completely erase the corpses. He then thought carefully about what just happened.

Vulcan thought that it was a surprising and needless incident for

him, but they must have had a reason since they wouldn't pick a fight without one.

Vulcan was very curious about this.

‘Just what was the reason.’

Vulcan repeated casting and canceling fire magic on his left hand as he thought deeply about this.

However, he couldn't think of anything.

It was obvious.

He had not had met any human being in the past 25 years. It would have been odd if he could think of something suspicious.

Inside of Vulcan started to boil. Unable to hold down the anger, Vulcan let it out.

“KUUUUUUAAAAAAAAA!”

It was enough to make the ground shake.

He quickly went toward the boulder.

It was the one that the two from earlier were hiding behind.

Without the help of mana, Vulcan used his raw strength and pounded on the boulder with his right fist.

KWANG!

Crack...

Kwarururururururu...

The crack that happened on the center spread out like a spider web. The boulder broke into small pieces.

Vulcan let out his stress through primitive violence.

However, it didn't make him feel vented at all.

He raised his hands and started to pull out his hair as he criticized himself for his own actions earlier with the two.

'Ugh. I ended up killing them all because they attacked me so suddenly. I should have kept at least one of them alive and learn the reason even if I had to resort to torture...

If they are the end of it, then it does not matter.'

Vulcan figured that, although he may never know why they

attacked him, at least he won't have any source of danger to him now.

‘However, if these two are not the end of it?’

If there were others besides Chimera maker who are targeting him?

If that was the case, the mistake he made earlier could have serious ramifications to his safety.

Having thought this far, Vulcan suddenly stopped thinking after hearing a sound that suddenly happened.

He looked around.

After that, with dumbfounded look on his face, he spat out a sigh.

“... Ugh.”

There were five mages who swiftly flew up to the sky.

Watching them, Vulcan felt deep inside that something got seriously tangled up

# Chapter 84 - Fireflies (3)

---

Tadak.

Tadak.

The five mages landed with light movements.

They were all wearing blue robes and wielded long staffs. It seemed they completely excluded the body’s physical strength abilities and instead delved deeply only in magic.

To be prepared against Vulcan’s surprise attack, the five mages had a few magic spells already floating in the air. Their faces were bulging with greed that could not be hidden.

They looked like hunters with incredibly rare, precious prey right in front of their eyes. Looking at the mages, Vulcan quickly used the SYSTEM.

[Malrop, Human Mage]

[749Lv]

[Sinit, Human Mage]

[744Lv]

...

[Baiel, Human Mage]

[739Lv]

‘Phew.... This is fortunate. With those levels, I don’t think they will be much of a threat to me.’

They couldn’t even be compared to the Ying-Yang Elemental Enchantress that Vulcan ran into earlier. In fact, they were inferior to even the Chimeras.

At the moment, Vulcan was confident about fighting against ten Chimeras charging at him at once. Because of this, Vulcan was not feeling any anxiety what so ever about the mages with such levels.

Thinking he was not in the worst-case scenario, Vulcan unconsciously sighed in relief.

The mages saw Vulcan doing this. One of them broke into belittling laughter.



It was a skinny man with the name 'Sinit' on the SYSTEM window.

“Kuku. Have you gone insane? You are sighing in relief in this situation? Or could it be that you are not comprehending the situation you are in?

“...”

“Tsk. Why aren't you answering? It's no fun at all when there is no response...”

“That's enough, Sinit. We don't have time. Don't you get that? Are you going to take the responsibility when other bastards butt in after hearing about the news?”

“That is... You are right. I am sorry. Let's finish this quickly and get the reward.”

Vulcan watched them treating him like a prey that was already caught. Vulcan was dumbfounded.

It was not like these mages were some thugs at a small town. Vulcan was sure that they were mages with plenty of experiences from having lived for several hundred years at least.

However, they were exuding boundless confidence against an opponent who they didn't even properly assessed the strength. Vulcan could not understand them.

‘Just where is their baseless confidence coming from?’

At that moment, a thought zapped through Vulcan’s head.

‘Could it be that information about me had been spread to many?’

This situation could not be explained unless that was the case.

The mages were surrounding Vulcan, and their attitude was that of someone who had complete knowledge of the opponent’s strength.

It was as if they were absolutely certain that there was no way Vulcan could possibly neutralize them.

However, it was not like Vulcan still had the protective blessing stuck on his forehead. Also, it was not like he was demonstrating his strength for everyone to see.

Even so, Vulcan didn’t think the mages possessed a perfect scan ability like his SYSTEM.

The mages were showing such attitudes despite all those. Vulcan figured that it could only mean one thing. The mages have picked up words about Vulcan from somewhere.

‘It seems the information they have are seriously off though.’

Having thought this far, Vulcan tilted up both tips of his mouth and looked at one of the mages.

The mage was the one named Sinit who provoked Vulcan earlier.

“... What’s this? That bastard is looking at me and smiling...”

“Is there a reason to be curious about it? As Malrop said, we don’t know how the situation could change. Also, that guy could have gotten stronger through 25 years, so don’t let your guards down.”

“Kuk. He is a resident of Act 2. How much stronger could he have gotten from training only for 25 years?”

Most of the residents of Act 2 were stuck behind walls for very long time.

It was normal for them to not achieve any progress from training for about 25 years worth of time. Because of this, even the other mages, who brought up the possibility of Vulcan having become stronger, were not worried.

It could be said that they just said it to mean that they should not let their guard down during the battle which was about to commence soon.

‘That bastard’s strength is... Based on the standard from the 25 years ago, he is only slightly stronger than me. With five of us attacking him as a team, we can catch him alive without any casualties!’

Malrop, the leader of five mages, quickly raised his staff.

The staff had two large fist sized magic stones. The stones exuded blinding light.

Other four mages, who were watching Malrop, quickly raised their staffs and cast magic.

Woouooooong.

Magic energies were being radiated from five high level mages. The ground shook violently from the energies.

‘I’ve heard that he is very fast, so let’s cast multiple gravity magic spells to keep his movement speed at check, and...’

Malrop quickly cast multiple spells as he thought about what would happen from now on through the battle.

However, he could no longer continue his train of thoughts.

Shuuuuuuuk.

Instantly, Vulcan disappeared from their sight.

It was completely unexpected. Five mages felt their hearts sinking from the shock.

They all reactively cast most powerful defensive spells they could cast. However, they were not enough to stop Vulcan's attack.

Pazuzuzuzuzuk.

Chuuuuaaaaaaaaaak.

Of the mages, Malrop was the one who proudly held the highest level. Vulcan moved to the back of Malrop. The energy from the Thunder God Blade technique grew through Vulcan's blade. The energy fell quickly from above and mercilessly tore through several thousand layers of air shields.

With all of his protective spells now eliminated, it was not possible for Malrop to stop the Thunder God Blade with his bare body.

Malrop didn't even have the chance to feel the pain. He was cut in half and collapsed.

Thump...

Thump...

Two pieces of his corpse collapsed with a bit of delay from each other.

The intestines and organs poured out from his body and made a mess on the floor. The blood spread in all directions. It even spread near Vulcan's feet.

Time passed, and it was not short. However, the mages could not make any move.

Choking in overwhelming fear, they only stared at Vulcan. The mages looked like little children who just witnessed a murder.

Whuaaaaaaak.

Vulcan used fire magic and blew away the blood on his boots.

Shocked by Vulcan's behavior, the four mages got a grip and quickly gathered in.

Now, they were completely different from how they were trying to surround Vulcan with far distance between them and Vulcan.

Vulcan, as he watched them having panicked look on their faces, slowly said,

“Why are you attacking me?”

“ ... ”

“Do you not intend to talk? In that case, I’ll ask a little later.”

It was a monotonic voice coming out of an expressionless face.

However, underneath, it contained fury that was even greater than what could be expressed by an outcry that was full of emotions.

Sinit instinctively felt that. He tried to gulp with dry neck. However, he couldn’t even do that well.

His mouth was already completely dry. It was making him extremely uncomfortable.

Instead of talking back at Vulcan for what he just said, Sinit cast the magic that he was most confident about.

After that, using all of his might, Sinit launched the cast magic toward Vulcan.

Shuuuuuwaaaaaak.

Kwaaaaang!

What appeared to be a large meteor sized ice fell from the sky and struck where Vulcan was standing.

It contained horrifying cold. Even the lava in the Lava Field lost its heat and cooled nearby.

However, Vulcan, who was at the center of the strike, was still standing tall and strong with the same expressionless face.

Fire ignited from all over his body and swept away the cold energy around him at an instant. The heat made the solidified lava to flow again.

Sinit's split voice echoed through the empty air.

“What the hell are you all doing you retards! Hurry up and attack!”

The other mages came to their senses and started to launch endless barrage of spells.

Several hundred different varieties of elemental magic spells were cast at an instant and came flying toward Vulcan.

Kwuakwuakuwakuwakwang!

Boombaboomboombaboom!



The four mages were fearful. It was enough to make them shake.

They could not understand why they were shaking in fear like they were at the moment.

Each and every one of them were undefeated best grand mages from their lower dimensions. Even in Act 1 where the greatest geniuses gathered, they were the best.

They were mages who achieved such great heights. They may be in danger at the moment, but they could not easily accept the fact that they lost their composure like this.

However, they were unaware of one thing.

They didn't know that the emotion called fear could balloon up indefinitely depending on who the opponent was.

They didn't know that all of their past duels, struggles, and dangers combined could not even be compared to the intense battle spirit exuded by Vulcan.

The mages were mentally cornered to the tip of a cliff. They were pouring in all of their strengths without thinking about the limits of their mana.

The Act 2's ground was made by greatest gods. The sturdy ground was destroyed completely from their magic, and the mages continued to launch more magic attacks.

Kwakuwakuwakuwang!

Whhhhoooong. Whooouuuoooong.

However, turning their efforts into wastes, Vulcan used the Thunder God's Might and Lightning Dragon Steps at peak performance and dodging all of their magic attacks.

Vulcan was zooming around at incredible speed. All sorts of magic attacks fell along in length of the tail to chase Vulcan.

However, not one of them made direct hit on Vulcan.

To suppress Vulcan's movement, the mages used all sorts of anti-boost magic spells. However, they were all bounced off by highly concentrated barrier. Even the magic attacks that were shot by predicting Vulcan's trajectories ended up missing the target.

Nothing was working!

Anxieties became even more apparent in the looks of the mages' faces. The magic spells being poured out now contained even more power. One of the mages, to cast even more powerful magic, stopped launching magic attacks and started to recite a long spell.

At that moment, Vulcan, who was only behaving defensively, went on the offense.

As if he was demonstrating that the moves he showed so far was not his full power, he leisurely charged in from the diagonal angle. The mages gasped for air as they saw Vulcan charging in.

Vulcan was dashing in at fearsome speed.

Toward the front, the mages indiscriminately launched several thousand magic attacks.

However, they were already within Vulcan's attack range.

Vulcan used the Land-fold Technique to jump over as much ground as possible and lengthened the Thunder God Blade.

It was like a farmer swinging his scythe to harvest the crops. With his Thunder God Blade, Vulcan swept through the lower bodies of the mages horizontally in wide swing.

Suurguk guk guk guguk.

“Kuuuuaaaaaak!”

“Kuhurk!”

At an instant, the four mages lost their legs.

That was not the end.

Vulcan had prepared the Destructive Core earlier. He shot it toward one of the mage to crush him. Vulcan then cast Ifrit's Fist and blew up another mage.

Vulcan left the remaining two mages alive. However, Vulcan quickly swung his blade and cut off their arms.

Thump...

Along with the staffs tightly grabbed on by the hands, the staffs fell to the ground.

Vulcan violently tore off the hands from the staffs and put the staffs away in his inventory. Vulcan then casually glanced at the men who were crawling on the ground.

Literally, the two mages were completely disarmed.

Like dragonflies who had their wings torn off, the mages crawled on the ground as they screamed in pain.

“U.... Uuuk!”

“Kuuuaaaak! Kkuhuk. Kulok, Kulok!”

Blood was gushing out of their mouths endlessly.

They were using excess amount of mana, and they also received devastating damages while at it, so they had suffered serious internal damages.

Vulcan brought out two potions and spread the potion on the parts of their bodies where the limbs were cut off to stop the bleeding. He then brought out two more and poured them into their mouths.

After a while, the two mages, Sinit and Baiel, could come out of panic.

With their faces covered in fear, they looked up at Vulcan.

Vulcan's skills were awestriking. They were completely unexpected.

Vulcan's power was enough to go up against highly ranked Demi-gods in Act 2.

Thinking about his own pathetic state with both of his arms and legs cut off, Sinit thought about Bae Su Jin.

Vulcan's current height was different from what Bae Su Jin informed the mages. Vulcan was at an incredible height where only few in Act 2 could match him.

Sinit thought he was scammed. He ground his teeth and cursed Bae Su Jin.

‘Those evil sons of bitches... They even swore to gods as they sold lies... Sons of bitches! Chewing them off won’t be enough to quench my anger! Dirty bastards!’

Actually, Sinit’s anger was misplaced, although he was not aware of this. Still, Sinit and Baiel could only think this way.

While they were thinking such things, Vulcan came near their heads.

Vulcan’s shadow was cast on their heads.

In the mages’ faces, the expressions full of hatred disappeared. Now, boundless despair filled the place.

Vulcan threatened by igniting and extinguishing flames. He then said with heartless voice,

“Now, I’m sure that you would want to talk. I’ll ask again. Why did you attack me?”

\*

Around the time Vulcan was fighting off the five mages after the

Blood Demon and Ying-Yang Elemental Enchantress, there was someone who was watching them all in real time.

Baeron, a mage who was sent here as a scout from the Bae Su Jin.

He had surveillance magic cast over the Lava Field. Through it, he confirmed Vulcan's presence. Baeron quickly used the communication magic and contacted Bae Su Jin at the main base.

It was obvious, but this caused a huge stir at the Bae Su Jin. Hellmout, one of bosses of the Bae Su Jin, said in agitated voice,

- What! When did you find him!

“About two to three minutes ago...”

- No. That's not important. We will send our guys right now. We will send about ten, so you keep watch there. If you think he will be leaving to go somewhere, keep him there. You can do at least that much with your skill, right?

Baeron was a high-level mage even among the Bae Su Jin.

Hellmout thought that although it would be impossible for Baeron to beat Vulcan, Baeron should be more than able to at least keep Vulcan from running away and buy them time.

However, in voice that utterly lacked confidence, Baeron said

over the communication magic that he absolutely could not do that. Hellmout shouted in anger,

- I know your power! You are saying you can't even do that one thing now!

“Please... I'm not trying to disobey. Vulcan's power is... Sir... Please do not get angry as you hear what I have to tell you now.”

- ... What? Hurry up.

Hellmout felt that something was off.

Instead of criticizing Baeron, Hellmout now urged him to hurry up and speak the rest. Along with the sound of Baeron gulping, Hellmout could hear Baeron's shaky voice.

“Having ten won't be enough. Sir... You... No. I think the Commander should come.”



# Chapter 85 - Escape (1)

---

- What? What's that supposed to mean. Explain better.

Hellmout asked again as if he didn't understand what Baeron said.

However, Baeron had no choice but to repeat the same words like a parrot.

“That is... Ten of ordinary mages from Bae Su Jin cannot handle Vulcan. We need at least one boss... or the Commander should come. I think that would be the best way to ensure Vulcan's capture and also minimize casualties.”

Having said this far, Baeron felt that he did not explain enough. Baeron added more detail.

“When Vulcan came out to the Lava Field, Vampire Demon and Ying-Yang Elemental Enchantress ambushed him, and Vulcan fought them with great, incredible ease. It didn't even take one minute... They were both killed before even being able to put up a good resistance. I think the information from the Oracle must be wrong.”

- ...

Silence flowed through the area for a moment.

It took time for Hellmout to accept what Baeron just explained. Baeron anxiously waited while being concerned that what he just said might agitate Hellmout.

However, as the silence continued for a while, Baeron couldn't just wait anymore. It appeared that Vulcan was about to start another fight.

Baeron tried talking to Hellmout again.

“Excuse me, Sir?”

- Oracle's information couldn't be wrong. Are you sure you assessed him correctly?

Annoyed voice flew out of Hellmout's mouth.

When assessing someone more powerful than oneself, a certain amount of exaggeration got mixed in.

Hellmout was doubting Baeron's observation. He wondered if Baeron was overestimating Vulcan.

However, Hellmout could not exclude the possibility that Vulcan really did become incredibly powerful.

‘Baeron is one of the very few in Bae Su Jin who are level-headed, so... he is probably not making this up. Still, it's only been 25

years. Just what changed and by how much? Even if he got stronger, it couldn't...'

Regardless, at the moment, nothing was known with certainty. Hellmout could only hope that Baeron would deliver accurate assessment.

With frustrated look on his face, Hellmout waited for Baeron's next words.

However, this time, it was Baeron who was extending the silence. Because Hellmout was higher ranked in Bae Su Jin than Baeron, he nagged at Baeron to speak.

- Hey, Baeron? Are you listening?

"Huk! Yes, I am listening."

- I asked if you are certain that you assessed him correctly. Just what are you doing? Why are you so distracted in middle of the call!

"T... That is..."

Around the time they were having this conversation, through the surveillance magic, Baeron was watching the battle between Vulcan and five mages at the Lava Field.

Also, Baeron was shocked even more so from this than how he felt after seeing Vulcan fight the Blood Demon and the Enchantress.

‘This is... What ridiculousness...!’

The start of the battle, where Vulcan instantly ambush-attacked and killed one of the mages before the five mages’ magic could focus, was incredibly surprising by itself. However, what transpired afterwards was even more overwhelming.

An unbelievably powerful blade of golden light extended out to several tens of meters.

Caught by the blade, the mages were cut through like straws. Watching the mages, Baeron couldn’t get a hold of himself.

‘This isn’t the power of someone who just took off the newbie badge... No, this isn’t the power of a human being.’

Of all humans, the one who was known to be the most powerful was Rex Bruo, the Commander of Bae Su Jin.

Even the ever prideful Dragonians and all but invisible Demi-gods acknowledged him for his power, and him only.

However, it seemed Vulcan was even stronger.

Baeron was just a normal mage in Bae Su Jin. Through his eyes, Baeron could not confirm it, but how Vulcan was slaughtering the mages inside the monitor seemed like Vulcan lacked nothing to be given the title of the strongest of all humans.

Still in shock, Baeron momentarily forgot that he was in middle of communication. He instantly came to senses when Hellmout shouted.

However, Baeron still had awestruck feeling inside. Because of this, he couldn't find his usual logical tone.

“At minimum... he is as powerful or stronger than bosses in Bae Su Jin. I know I am lacking in strength, but... No... Anyway, you need to get here quickly! The bastard is going somewhere!”

Baeron saw that Vulcan was taking the two defeated mages and going somewhere. Baeron explained to Hellmout in hurry.

Tracking Vulcan was not going to be difficult as long as he stayed within the Lava Field. However, if he moved further away, even the interference magic against the return scroll that they casted at the area was going to become useless.

They had to stop Vulcan from returning to the Espo City.

Hellmout knew this well, so he answered quickly.

- The Commander is in middle of an experiment that he cannot

stop. He cannot come right away. He said he will head out as soon as the experiment is over.

“But...”

- I'll go there for now.

Hellmout said in stern voice.

- Make sure to determine where he is going. I'll bring 15 of the members and even my packed lunches.

\*

Vulcan used magic and floated two mages on to the air who now had no limbs left.

He then moved to a remote place within the Lava Field where he used to come often. It was because Vulcan thought it would not be a good idea to have other people see him.

Actually, Vulcan wanted to go back to the cave he came out of. However, the entrance had already disappeared into the ground.

‘Actually, the dungeon has one-person limit anyway, so I guess I could not have entered there with these people?’

Vulcan had a strange thought out of the blue for the moment. He then looked at the two mages near his feet.

Vulcan had expressionless eyes.

His eyes didn't even have a grain of mercy. Sinit looked at Vulcan's cold brown eyes and realized he stood no chance of survival. Sinit tightly closed his eyes.

'It's no use... I thought this was the greatest luck that came to me in my 2000 years of life, but... to think I'll end my life in such pathetic state...'

Sinit hoped he could turn back time just one hour.

His thought process naturally flowed toward Bae Su Jin.

Of course, his thoughts were not positive. Hatred and fury toward Bae Su Jin was boiling up like smelting furnace and making his body hot.

'Those bastards... chopping them into pieces and tossing them as pig feeds won't be enough... You call this a newbie who had been in Act 2 for only 40 years! You said he was at ordinary level at the Lava Field! This guy is powerful enough to fold up most of Demi-gods!'

Under God's supervision, tournaments were held occasionally at the Espo City with prizes.

The winner received armors and weapons made by Parkers, the god of blacksmith, and tremendous honor. Because of this, Demi-gods, Dragonians and countless powerful practitioners entered to show off their skills.

Sinit was not skilled enough to enter the tournament. However, he had watched the tournaments several times, so he was well aware of how powerful the Demi-gods were.

Vulcan was not lacking even in comparison to them. He was at such ridiculous height.

Against such absolute power, five of little puppies picked fights. It was obvious why things turned out the way it did.

Regret, hatred, self-criticism... Sinit's head was in chaos with such thoughts. Vulcan's voice could be heard.

“You should carefully answer to the questions I am about to ask.”

Vulcan gathered huge amount of mana into his left hand.

Perhaps Baiel, the one who used to be next to Sinit, was isolated somewhere else. Sinit could not see him.

Feeling Vulcan's violent intensity, Sinit gulped.



“If you want to lie, that’s fine. However, after I compare your answers with the other guy’s answers, if there are even slightest differences...”

Boooom...

The mana focused on Vulcan’s left hand exploded instantly.

It was a tacky and obvious act. However, from Sinit’s perspective, who lost all of his limbs, it was enough to strike fear in him.

“Even if I answered... I won’t be able to live, would I?”

“You will be able to die comfortably instead of being sold to the Chimera maker.”

Vulcan just made stuff up and tossed out the words.

However, Sinit was aware of Chimera maker’s existence. The threat had a huge effect.

The idea of being cut to pieces and becoming parts for Chimera was striking even more fear than the death itself.

Sinit decided to speak before the real torture begun.

‘I am absolutely pissed at the Bae Su Jin bastards too.’

It was them who played him using garbage information.

Sinit didn’t feel guilty at all about spilling information about Bae Su Jin.

“You are being attacked because...”

From his mouth, words about Bae Su Jin came out in verbose detail.

Bae Su Jin operated in shadows, but they were not always staying in hiding like how Chimera maker operated.

When they needed more man power as they worked on their dirty businesses, Bae Su Jin occasionally asked low lives of Act 2 to work for them. Sinit and the other four mages had worked for Bae Su Jin under request before.

Because of this, Sinit knew about Bae Su Jin in more detail than normal people. Vulcan was happy to hear such detailed explanation. However, at the same time, the bleak future was starting to become deeper. Vulcan could not hide his anxiousness.

‘A mage organization with 200 members... Average level is slightly above this bastard... This is insane. That’s like 200 Chimeras.’

Moreover, it seemed the four bosses and the Commander above them were significantly more powerful.

To make rough estimates, bosses were around early to mid 800 and the Commander was around mid to late 800.

Of course, they could be weaker than that. However, it seemed certain now that an organization called Bae Su Jin was gigantic in size.

Vulcan asked the same question to Baiel, the other mage, and then compared the answers.

Baiel had similar hatred toward Bae Su Jin, so he told Vulcan honestly everything he knew.

“Thanks, have a safe trip.”

Boom

Puk!

Vulcan blew up their heads clean with fire magic. Vulcan dropped his own head and then sighed big.

‘I sure get to sigh a lot lately. Huuuu.’

However, he could not help but to sigh.

He even felt that all evil in the world was focusing only at him.

‘Are Players that precious? They are all over the place at the Beloong City.’

Of course, Vulcan heard that there were hardly any Players in other Act 1 cities. However, Vulcan never dreamed people would chase after him like this with bloodshot eyes.

Moreover, Act 2 was full of all sorts of rare and special beings. Despite this, they were targeting only him with incredible persistence. Vulcan couldn’t make sense of this.

‘Are Players so precious that they would resort to this? Or could it be that they thought they won’t have to worry about the aftermath once they kill me because they thought I’m a pushover without any connections?’

Vulcan thought they were both plausible.

Of course, that didn’t mean Vulcan thought their actions could be understandable.

Vulcan was again burning in full force from anger. He was biting hard, enough to break his back teeth.

After the Chimeras, now there was Bae Su Jin.

These two groups were already difficult for Vulcan to handle by himself.

It was to the point where Vulcan wondered if he would be able to hunt or level up at all right now. The future looked dreary.

The bigger problem was that those two group may not be the end of it. This could just be the beginning.

‘Would these bastards be all of the ones that are targeting me?’

‘Even if I somehow manage to wipe them off away, could I be certain that all danger disappeared with them?’

‘No... Could I even handle defeating the bastards from the Bae Su Jin? Against 200 mages?’

With so many thoughts tangled up, they were throwing his head into chaos.

No matter how he thought of it, Vulcan could not come to a proper conclusion. They were frustrating and difficult problems.

Vulcan stopped thinking.

Shooooook.

He opened the inventory on the empty air and brought out a return scroll. He tightly grabbed on the scroll and tore it to pieces.

For now, the right answer was avoiding the immediate danger.

He thought he should return to Espo City first and inquire Oracle or ask for advice from Fowaru from the general store.

However, the situation did not flow as he hoped.

Woooooong

[Return scroll failed.]

[Magic energy is unstable. Long distance teleportation is not possible.]

“... Now what is this about?”

Vulcan opened the inventory again and swiftly tore up another return scroll.

However, the same notification appeared.

[Return scroll failed.]

[Magic energy is unstable. Long distance teleportation is not possible.]

“... This.... Fuck.”

Vulcan suddenly became anxious.

Foul language spat out of his mouth.

Despite the bad atmosphere and the situation rolling along in a strange path, Vulcan was leisurely digging information because he trusted the return scroll.

It was because Vulcan could rest easy as long as he returned to the Espo City. Once he got there, it would not have mattered if Chimeras, members of Bae Su Jin, or their daddies or grand daddies showed up.

However, with something unthinkable happening, Vulcan could not hide it. He panicked.

‘This is... Again, somebody... Considering the size, they seem to

be Bae Su Jin.'

Out of the frying pan and now into the fire, Vulcan felt numerous energies nearby. Vulcan was certain they were targeting him.

There were over twenty individual signatures.

The scale was at a whole another dimension from what he fought so far. The look on Vulcan's face petrified.



## Chapter 86 - Escape (2)

---

The approaching enemies were still quite far away, so Vulcan could not confirm exactly. However, it appeared that they were at least on par with the mages earlier.

They were far below Vulcan's height. However, 25 was a whole different playing field in comparison to fighting just five.

If they poured out magic attacks indiscriminately, it was going to be a tough fight even if Vulcan fully utilized the Land-Fold.

Also, there was one other thing that was making Vulcan concerned.

Vulcan could see a man who was wearing gloves with red magic stones.

The man had protruding cheekbones and wide mouth. The teeth were showing a lot. His face was very defined and made Vulcan think of a dinosaur.

Extraordinary existence could be felt from his strong impression.

‘He is not at the level of Belgeram, but... He is the strongest of all humans I have seen so far.’

The man was far superior in comparison to the rest of the mages.

Vulcan thought that the battle will be extremely tough if the opponents fought under his command.

‘I probably... will be at a disadvantage.’

Vulcan was picturing his own defeat even with drinking potions like water.

Of course, that was excluding the option of Enlightened God Summon.

Vulcan currently had collected enough Vitality Marbles to summon the Greatest Battle God. With the summoning, he was sure he could take care of this level of threat.

‘Still, the whole situation is not going to conclude from ending just these bastards.’

If the entire forces of the Bae Su Jin was here, Vulcan would have summoned Yur Dong-bin and just think of the summon as exploding a nuclear bomb. However, now was not the time.

Against the number of the enemies currently approaching, Vulcan felt that it would be a serious waste of Vitality Marbles to summon the Greatest Battle God.

Having thought this far, Vulcan used the Thunder God’s Might to

the maximum and used the Beast Transformation.

Uuuududududuk.

The overall body's bone structure became a little bigger. His muscles swelled up. The joints in the lower body turned into a structure that was more suitable for running.

On top of this, Vulcan even used Spirit Form.

Pazuzuzuzuzuk.

There was a golden feline predator who was exuding sparks from the entire body.

Vulcan became what looked like a god beast only seen in legends. Vulcan took off in unbelievable speed.

Suuuwawaaaaaak.

He was faster than an arrow released from a bow that was pulled to the breaking point by the power of a Demi-god.

“Hurrr... Hup!”

Literally, in a blink of an eye, Vulcan was about to break through the formation that surrounded him. The mage who was standing

closest to Vulcan gasped for air.

The mage reactively used the magic he was most used to and tried to stop Vulcan. However, it was utterly lacking in power.

Vulcan used Lightning Dragon Steps and dodged the magic attacks almost without slowing down at all. Vulcan ran to the distance.

“Stop him!”

Along with Hellmout’s shouting, a flashy banquet of magic spells started.

Their individual power would have made Vulcan snort and laugh. However, there were 21 mages.

There were several thousand shots of highest level magic attacks coming at Vulcan. Passing through them, Vulcan felt like he was trapped inside a layer of fire.

Despite that, Vulcan was moving all over the places in incredible speed and running away. The mages were absolutely impressed.

Hellmout, one of bosses in Bae Su Jin, was one of them. He was genuinely impressed by Vulcan’s god-like moves. If it was not for the fact that he was here to hunt Vulcan, and Vulcan was the prey, the situation was warranting applause.

‘However, this is no time to indulge in appreciations.’

Hellmout released all of the mana that he had been gathering since a while ago and summoned gigantic sand wall.

Kurururururru.

The wall surged at an instant. It was incredibly tall and thick.

It was so huge that Vulcan could not jump over it even with the Land-Fold technique. Vulcan clicked his tongue.

Also, the wall had incredible range. Vulcan felt he would be trapped in the mages’ formation if he tried to go around the wall.

‘Damn it.’

Vulcan cursed inside. He disengaged the Spirit Form and raised his front paws.

There were golden energies lingering on sharp claws protruding from the paws.

The Thunder God Blade technique was demonstrated in Beast Transformation state and scratched the wall.

Kwuagagagagak.

The wall looked sturdy like the Great Wall of China. However, it was sliced like tofu.

Having created a breakthrough route, Vulcan sensed success and pierced into the gap.

However, that’s as far as he went.

“Damn it....”

Before he realized, yet another wall was summoned.

It looked like there was going to be another wall after this if Vulcan broke through this one.

Vulcan let go of his thoughts of escaping. He turned to look behind.

Vulcan could see 21 mages who finally caught up to where he was.

[Pei, Human Mage]

[745Lv]

[Lati, Human Mage]

[751Lv]

...

[Hellmout, Enhanced Human Mage]

[829Lv]

‘As I thought, that bastard must be their leader.’

With piercing gaze, Vulcan looked over Hellmout.

He figured the earth magic that generated the walls must be from Hellmout.

Hellmout was going to be the biggest problem in the battle to come.

Vulcan disengaged the Beast Transformation and drew his sword. Vulcan said,

“Why are you hunting me?”

His voice was amplified through magic.

Having heard the voice, all mages turned their heads toward Hellmout.

It was because nobody was going to speak on behalf of Hellmout, who was their leader.

However, instead of responding right away, Hellmout just steadily glared at Vulcan.

In his eyes, there was a sense of surprise that could not be hidden.

‘As I thought. Baeron was not exaggerating.’

The incredible speed that Vulcan demonstrated earlier...

Also, the destructive power that cut through the ‘God’s Barrier,’ the wall that he summoned after taking time, in a single blow...

Vulcan’s strength was beyond comparison from what he was 25 years ago.

Hellmout was certain that Vulcan was well above himself. Also, Vulcan could even go up against their Commander.



‘No. I think the Commander would be pushed back a little.’

When he got rid of prejudice and assessed objectively, Hellmout wanted to raise Vulcan’s arm as the victor.

Vulcan really was incredible.

Every organ and down to the individual cells, Hellmout wanted to cut open Vulcan and study them with uttermost attention.

“Hey. Are you deaf? Why are you chasing after me! I don’t even know your faces!”

Vulcan’s voice echoed through the area once again.

Hellmout responded this time. It was when he was about to open his mouth to respond.

Kwang!

Pazuzuzuzzuk.

Vulcan’s body was shot toward Hellmout like a rocket.

Vulcan was originally at quite a distance. Despite this, the gap between them was closed in an instant. The mages panicked and

shot magic attacks.

However, they could not hide the feeling that they were lacking in ways to respond against Vulcan's speed, which was going far past their expectations.

Shuuuuuushuut.

Vulcan even used the Land-Fold and approached within the striking distance to Hellmout. Vulcan thrust his blade toward Hellmout's mid area.

The Thunder God Blade's length had grown well beyond 100 meters. Instead of calling it a blade, it looked more like a spear.

Vulcan's attack was like the fury from a god, enough to pierce through everything!

Vulcan's attack was tearing apart the land and charging toward Hellmout's chest.

Kugwaaaaaak!

“Kuuuhuk!”

However, the attack ended up a failure.

A black shield suddenly appeared.

There was what appeared to be a giant heater shield. Vulcan's attack stopped, unable to pierce through the barrier. Vulcan had the look of disbelief on his face.

‘Impossible... I used all of my power in that attack!’

Vulcan's current level was 820.

He was definitely below Hellmout, who was at 829.

However, ever since Vulcan became a Demi-god, he came into possession of power that was far stronger than that of a human being. Also, with High Quality Breath from the Blue Dragon, his stats were raised up like popcorns by 30 levels.

Vulcan was able to fight even 850 level Balroc with ease. To assess Vulcan's power from human's perspective, Vulcan was a practitioner with 880 level abilities.

The attack was accumulation of the swordsmanship and magic that Vulcan honed to the extreme and even the Land-Fold technique, and the ambush attack was by Vulcan who possessed such incredible abilities. Despite this, he couldn't penetrate the defense magic in front of him.

It was a huge shock to Vulcan.

“Hut!”

Kuwaaaaaang!

Vulcan dodged a gigantic hammer that appeared out of thin air. He then greatly widened the distance and prepared himself for the oncoming attack that would follow.

Fortunately, there was no more attacks. Vulcan slowly calmed his breathing and looked at Hellmout and the mages behind the shield.

As if he was not able to comprehend the picture, Vulcan cringed.

The nine mages who were around Hellmout were all lying on the ground, dried up completely like mummies.

‘This is... just...’

Vulcan knew that the mages didn’t fall from his attack.

Vulcan never learned curse type magic of such kind. Also, even if he did learn one, making such high-level mages incapacitated so quickly with it was impossible.

Vulcan had panicked look on his face as he watched what happened. He suddenly thought of something and turned his gaze

toward Hellmout.

He then used the SYSTEM to scan Hellmout's abilities.

[Hellmout, Enhanced Human Mage]

[829Lv(+90)]

“... This is insane.”

“Insane? Huu... You have foul mouth.”

Hellmout disengaged the shield and returned Vulcan's mutter.

His face appeared to be in frenzy as if he just got a shot of steroid.

His body was swelled up. He looked like a battler instead of a mage, and humongous amount of mana could be felt from his body.

It was an incredible boost with effect that even the High-Quality Breath from the Blue Dragon could not be compared.

‘He scarified those people's lives to gather this power. No, were they not people to begin with?’

Vulcan had no way of knowing, and this was not important either.

The really important thing was what kind of incredible power that Hellmout, now nearly at level 900, was going to demonstrate from this point.

“You definitely have incredible skills. 25 years ago, it looked like you were far below me. Just how did you become strong like that? Did you run into a good fortune?”

“...”

Vulcan did not answer. He would not have believed it anyway if Vulcan explained that this was the result of training. Also, to start with, Vulcan didn't want to satisfy the curiosity of some low-life who treated people's life like bugs.

Instead, Vulcan fiddled with the object on his waist.

‘Perhaps... I might have to use this.’

Vulcan was deep in thought about what to do and ignoring Hellmout's question. Hellmout crumpled his face as if he was displeased. Slightly excited, Hellmout continued.

“Well, if you don't want to tell me, that's fine. Let's talk slowly

under the laboratory's light. Huuuuuaap!"

He extended his arms to left and right and operated mana.

Incredible amount of mana, the kind that was hard to believe to be coming from just one human being, was pouring out like ocean wave. Vulcan felt the chill surrounding his body. He also raised mana and resisted Hellmout's intensity.

'Just what kind of magic...'

Anxious, Vulcan quickly cast Destructive Core and dropped it toward Hellmout.

It was a multi-elemental magic with enough power to destroy a country.

However, it was stopped by the gigantic shield that appeared again.

Kuwwwaaaaang!

Paasusususu.

The Destructive Core was successful in crushing the Earth Shield. However, Vulcan wasn't able to deal even a nail scratch on Hellmout.

Vulcan decided that he might as well eliminate the remaining subordinates instead. Wielding the Strengthened Heavenly Lightning Blade, Vulcan charged toward the other mages.

“No!”

“Stop him!”

The mood felt like a one vs. one kind of battle was about to take place, but actually, the situation was where many were harassing just one.

Vulcan didn't know what kind of magic Hellmout was using. However, since Vulcan's attacks were not going to work against Hellmout anyway, reducing the number of small fries at least was only logical.

Using the Land-Fold, Vulcan approached the mage who was standing furthest from Hellmout and swung his blade with all of his might.

“Kuuuuurrrrk!”

It seemed Hellmout didn't have the power to take care of his subordinate at such distance. This time, even Hellmout didn't block Vulcan's attack. The mage who was cut on his waist coughed off a load of blood and died.

Vulcan didn't even glance at the mage who just died. Instead,



Vulcan moved toward the next target. The mage who was facing Vulcan charging straight at him was crumping his face like a toilet paper.

“Absolute defense!”

He activated a barrier. He even shouted the activation spell.

Watching the spherical barrier exuding blue light, Vulcan smirked.

That bastard’s level was 744.

There was no way that someone of that level was going to stop the Thunder God Blade.

“If you are confident, then try stopping this!”

Kuwwaaaaaang!

Uuujujuk.

Tsuuwwaaaaaaak.

Along with exhilarating shouting, Vulcan’s Thunder God Blade fell vertically at the barrier and mercilessly tore it apart before slicing through the mage’s body.

‘Excluding Hellmout, are there eight left? HUUU.... If Hellmout was not here, I could have handled this fight.’

Like earlier, Vulcan promptly moved toward the next target.

However, the battle didn’t flow so easily for him as it had earlier.

It definitely was fearsome and terrifying to watch Vulcan slaughtering mages all over the place while shooting out fierce lightning from all of his body.

However, it was also a well-established fact that the members of the Bae Su Jin were also superb mages.

They have panicked for a moment, but once they admitted to the difference in skills between themselves and Vulcan, the mages focused on holding out.

When Vulcan tried to kill just one mage, the other mages quickly supported the target with defensive magic and other attack magic to keep Vulcan in check. Even Vulcan was having difficulty cutting them down quickly like straws.

“Kuuuuuuuhuuurrrrk!”

After investing a very long time, Vulcan managed to kill just one more mage.

Vulcan calmed his breathing and drank a bottle of potion. However, he felt the sky was suddenly being covered in dark shadow. Vulcan quickly used Land-Fold.

Shooooook.

Kuwaaaaang!

A sword of incredible size collided with the ground. Lava and dust shot up as if there was an explosion.

Its physical power was surpassing that of a natural disaster.

Vulcan gulped as he watched the aftermath of that violent attack. He turned his head and looked at Hellmout.

Afterwards, Vulcan shook his head left and right.

A humongous sword...

A humongous shield...

A humongous solider shaped from mud, wielding them on each hand...

Perhaps because it had enormous quantity of soil and stones

highly compressed to the extreme, the concentration and weight of the being looked incredible.

Every time it took a step, the solid ground of the Act 2 sunk deep. It was that heavy.

This gigantic summon construct's mouth opened, and Hellmout's voice, now amplified by several ten folds, came out of it.

“It's been a while since I used the God's Keeper.”

“ ... ”

“Some like you should know well that resistance is meaningless. Surrender quietly. I'll at least spare your life.”

‘Bullcrap!’

Vulcan already knew what Bae Su Jin was after. Vulcan didn't have anything he could say besides foul words.

Vulcan spat and brought his left hand toward his left waist.

‘Now, my strength alone is definitely not enough!’

Even without fighting it, Vulcan could tell.

That magic was result of having sucked the life out of nine people. Vulcan could not handle it with the power that he had.

Perhaps Vulcan could get a praise by someone, something in lines of ‘you fought well.’ However, such words were meaningless in a battle with lives at stakes. Such words were useful only in sports.

Vulcan acknowledged it completely on the fact that he could not handle this by himself.

However, Vulcan had a move left.

It was a move that could turn this desperate situation instantly.

He could even call it a tactical nuke. Those bastards had no idea that Vulcan possessed such an incredible weapon.

Vulcan quickly injected the Beast Bird Kina Kina with mana and opened the inventory.

Kuwarurururururu.

Watching Kina Kina sucking in several tens of thousands of Vitality Marbles at an instant, Vulcan shouted loudly,

“Enlightened God Summon!”

## Chapter 87 - Escape (3)

---

Unlike the usual, the summoning took place immediately.

As if the process understood Vulcan's strong desire, the Greatest Battle God was selected without going through the selection window.

Wheeeeeeeooooooooo.

A sudden storm of wind engulfed the quiet Lava Field.

The storm like wind rushed from all sides and disrupted all mages' visions, including Hellmout.

Unbelievably intense wind was making them, even the best of all super humans, unable to open their eyes properly.

Watching this mysterious phenomenon, Hellmout started to feel anxious.

'What that bastard had shown us so far was already way beyond our wildest imaginations, yet... He still has something left to show!'

It was shock after shock.

As if being top-notch in lightning and fire magic were not

enough, the man was also well-versed in swordsmanship.

On top of this, this guy had been belittling his subordinates with strange movement technique that could not be considered as magic. Now, when Hellmout thought this was finally the end of Vulcan, Vulcan brought out yet another card.

Hellmout recalled the look on Vulcan's face when he shouted 'Enlightened God Summon.' Hellmout wondered if that's how a man using the triumph card would look.

Anxiety kept on rushing up inside Hellmout. Unable to stand still, Hellmout swung his gigantic sword.

Kuwaaaaaaaaaaa.

It was overwhelming. It felt like a mountain was falling from the sky.

It was violently tearing through the air. Incredible physical power, which felt like it could turn all into fine dust, was about to collide with the ground.

Clank

There was a being who stopped that gigantic sword.

There was a man, who was floating about one meter above the

ground, who merely raised one of his hands to block Hellmout's sword attack.

Hellmout forced himself to hide the shock on his face and carefully observed the new being who just appeared.

He was wearing Huayang hat and light brown colored traditional formal attire. He was a middle-aged man with long grown beard.

Incredible pressure could be felt from the combination of his strong eyebrows surging toward the sky and the proud look on his face.

However, because his body was semi-transparent, it also felt empty to look at him. It felt as if he was not really there. It felt strange to look at the man.

- Attacking so abruptly even without an introduction? It's a terrible way to greet someone.

Yur Dong-bin, the Blade God, looked at Vulcan and asked,

- You, are you the one who called?

“... Yes.”

With his lips shaking, Vulcan looked at Yur Dong-bin, the Greatest Battle God, and answered.



He was the greatest warrior in the Enlightened World. Yur Dong-bin had no intention of hiding his true power, and that made him look even greater.

Although Yur Dong-bin was not Vulcan's enemy, it took substantial amount of mental strength just to look at the man face to face.

[Yur Dong-bin, Blade God, the Greatest Battle God]

[999Lv]

This was the first time for Vulcan to see someone with level 999 ever since he came to Act 2.

The man was equal to Filder. The atmosphere exuded by the absolute power was overwhelming Vulcan. He then suddenly came to his senses and said,

“Blade God, with your power, will you be able to defeat those eight mages?”

- ...

Having heard Vulcan's words, Yur Dong-bin looked around all of

the mages in front of his eyes.

He was emotionless. His eyes looked like he was just looking at livestock that were about to be slaughtered at a slaughterhouse.

The mages of Bae Su Jin who were exposed to Yur Dong-bin's gaze shook their bodies as if the blade of the grim reaper was hanging below their necks.

There was nothing they could do.

They could only wait for their fate like a frog in front of a snake.

Only Hellmout could resist Yur Dong-bin's intensity to some extent. However, he was also feeling extremely overwhelmed nevertheless.

Like that, a moment passed. Yur Dong-bin turned his head toward Vulcan. Overwhelming voice could be heard from Yur Dong-bin.

- An Enlightened God's obligation is to save people and lead them to the right path, not hurt them. However, there is the request from the Blue Wind, and also, those people's hearts couldn't be more poisonous. Therefore, from the perspective of destroying abominations, I shall punish them.

It was like a long speech. Yur Dong-bin turned his head.

Now, the Bae Su Jin's mages were facing Yur Dong-bin's gaze again and shriveled. Only Hellmout withstood his pressure and poured out harsh insults.

“Load of bullcrap! Who do you think you are! Huuuuuaaaap!”

Hellmout shouted like a brave warrior.

The ground around him broke into pieces and got attached to the God's Keeper's body, sword and shield.

It was like clay pieces coming together. The God's Keeper's size increased, and its composition continued to compress into higher density material of sturdier nature.

Hellmout was using all of his might to operate mana. Watching this, Vulcan put up a serious look on his face.

‘It is ridiculous amount of mana... Much of it is being wasted, but still, the amount being invested itself is incredible!’

The cast speed was not very fast, so it would have been possible to attack Hellmout in the meantime. However, Vulcan didn't have the ability to penetrate those heavy shield and armor.

Vulcan looked at Yur Dong-bin.

As if there was nothing to worry about, the look on Yur Dong-bin remained unchanged. He was just watching what Hellmout was doing.

Vulcan didn't like what Yur Dong-bin was doing because it looked like he was yielding the opportunity for the pre-emptive strike.

It was not that Vulcan thought the amount of Vitality Marbles used to summon him was a waste.

A huge quantity of the marbles was required during the summoning and when the summoned god exerted great power. However, simply maintaining the summoned state didn't take much.

Still, Vulcan just could not understand why Yur Dong-bin was standing idly and watching as if it was a fire across a river when it was the perfect time to attack no matter who looked at the situation.

'Is Yur Dong-bin showing respect to the opponent because he is an Enlightened God? What's he standing around for? He should attack now while there is a gap.'

In the end, while Vulcan was thinking this, the God's Keeper appeared before him after growing significantly stronger. Looking at its proud and mighty appearance, Vulcan couldn't help but to crumple his face.

Hellmout, full of confidence in his face, said,

“You waited until I finished casting the magic. Why?”

Unlike earlier, Hellmout looked leisurely now.

Yur Dong-bin responded as if it was nothing.

- It's been a while since I came here. I was just curious how the underclassmen were doing.

“Oh, is that so? You think you have the qualification to judge?”

- Of course. You are not bad, but you brought out something beyond your abilities by overexerting, so you look very shabby. Also, you have all sorts of foul things pasted all over your body. The stench is so bad it is almost poking my nose.

After that, as if there really was horrible stench, Yur Dong-bin covered his nose.

That instantly spoiled Hellmout's mood. However, Hellmout didn't want to show Yur Dong-bin that he fell for the psychological trickery, so he responded as if he was just brushing it off.

“Is that so? You must be pretty highly ranked. If it smells that bad, then I shall make you go back to the Enlightened World.”

Kwakwakwakwakwang!

Surrounding Yur Dong-bin and Vulcan, gigantic walls appeared to their behind and the sides.

They were tall and thick pieces of land masses. They were even bigger than the walls that appeared earlier to stop Vulcan from escaping.

Now, watching Hellmout's gigantic sword falling to the gap, Vulcan activated the Superheated Inferno.

He was trying to escape this by transforming to fire spirit to teleport and use the Land-Fold repeatedly.

‘Blocking it by full frontal measure is definitely impossible!’

Vulcan quickly cast the spirit form and quickly glanced at Yur Dong-bin.

If he attacked first instead of caring about paying respect, he could have handled this with greater ease.

Vulcan was even feeling slight resentment toward Yur Dong-bin.

However, in the end, Vulcan didn't need to dodge Hellmout's attack.

Phuuushuuuuk

PhuPhuPhuPhuPhuPhuPhuk

“... Khuuurrrrrrk!”

“Kuuuurk!”

Khuuuuuuuuurrrrrrrrrrk!”

“... What is this.”

Vulcan was currently in fire spirit form.

Vulcan was dumbfounded. Not even able to teleport, he just muttered.

He could not help it.

In front of his eyes, there were eight blades that pierced through the mages.

The blades were exuding intense blue light. The light was blindingly bright. There was nobody that would not be surprised after seeing the blades, at least in Act 2.

In particular, the blade had pierced through Hellmout, who was

currently in God's Keeper mode that proudly demonstrated its incredible armor integrity. The blades were incredible. It would not have been wrong to call them pillars of light.

‘... Looks like the Blue Wind was not making stuff up.’

Vulcan had to pay a price that far exceeded even that of the highest quality breath from the Blue Dragon, but the Blue Dragon said Vulcan will be able to witness an incredible sight that is beyond comparison.

Vulcan finally got to experience it for himself.

He felt the chill going through his entire body.

Yur Dong-bin's move was not flashy at all. It looked extremely simple. However, it was surprisingly deadly and stealthy.

Vulcan thought avoiding this would be impossible.

- All right then.

Wheeeec

Kwaaaaaang!

Yur Dong-bin was up in the air, at about 10 meters above the



ground. He was blocking Hellmout's sword.

He dusted off his left hand in a large motion and tossed the gigantic sword to the distance. Yur Dong-bin said to Vulcan,

- I'll get going now. That bastard over there is not quite dead yet, so you handle it as you wish.

“Ah, yes!”

- Say hello to the Blue Wind for me.

Shoooooc

With that as the last words, Yur Dong-bin the Blade God got sucked into Kina Kina's mouth and disappeared.

Unlike the flashy, dramatic entrance he made, his exit was humble.

However, it felt like the sense of his huge existence was still lingering.

‘... He has something that cannot be overcome with simple increase in stats.’

With his entire body, Vulcan felt the majestic power of level 999.

He was shocked by the terrifying power. On the other hand, Vulcan also thought the best thing he had done since he came to the Act 2 was making trades with the Blue Dragon.

‘Now that I think about it, does this mean the Blue Dragon or Mr. Filder have this kind of power? I better not get on their bad sides.’

Of course, that was not the most important thing at the moment.

Vulcan searched the rubbles of the God’s Keeper and found Hellmout.

His body was almost torn in half around the waist. Crumping his face in pain, Hellmout muttered,

“How could... Such power...”

Puuurrrrrrk

“Shut up. I don’t have time.”

To take the time to diligently explain about the ability in verbose detail, the situation was not looking good. As a one last check, Vulcan brought out a return scroll and tore it.

[Return failed.]

[The magic energy is unstable. Long distance teleportation is not possible.]

‘As I thought, it is still not working. They must have done something.’

Vulcan cringed big time.

‘Of course, it could not be that they meddled with the return scroll magic in all of Act 2, which is a vast place. At best, they probably did it to the Lava Field and pathways nearby.’

However, even going that far was going to be incredibly dangerous for Vulcan.

Fighting the warriors or the five mages he met in the beginning were not bad.

However, any bigger forces...

Vulcan opened the inventory and checked the remaining Vitality Marbles.

Afterwards, with slightly angry face, he bit his lower lips.

‘... I heard that it will cost a lot, but to think it would be this much...’

There were only half of the Vitality Marbles left.

Of course, the power demonstrated was worth the price. However, he still thought it was too much.

At this rate, it was obvious that Yur Dong-bin's summoning would expire before he could defeat all of the Bae Su Jin members.

Vulcan agonized over this.

The precious time that he didn't have was ticking away. However, Vulcan also feared a terrible outcome should he tried to simply flee the area.

‘Should I try going back to the Lava Demon Cave?’

Vulcan shook his head.

Perhaps he could if he had plenty of food left. However, at the moment, going back inside the cave was no different from living numbered days.

‘If I knew this was going to happen, I should have bought 50 or 100 years worth of food!’

Regrets came in like tidal wave.

Of course, like most regrets, it was completely useless in helping Vulcan overcome the danger he was facing right now.

‘No. How would I have known that things would turn out this way.’

Vulcan cringed big time.

He agonized over it some more and thought about various ways to escape. In the end, he realized there was only one way. He carefully focused his mind.

‘By any chance... This should work at least, right? After all, it is a legendary rate skill.’

From top of Vulcan’s head, golden energy poured out.

It was as if paint was flowing. The energy slowly soaked Vulcan’s body. The mysterious energy completely surrounded Vulcan’s body after a minute and made his existence faint.

Having noticed the skill progressed this far, Vulcan, now with certainty, smiled.

‘Good. It is working. Is it because this is not magic?’

Vulcan didn’t know why it was working. He didn’t want to know

in the first place.

He was just thankful that he could escape the danger without getting hurt, not even a hair.

Toward the end, Vulcan thought about Bae Su Jin and ground his teeth.

‘Just wait. I’ll see you around.’

Puk

It was like the sound of a fuse being disconnected. Vulcan completely disappeared.

With the Dimensional Cross Teleportation Technique completed, there was just the rubbles of the broken God’s Keeper taking up the space in shambles.

Rex Ruburo, the Commander of Bae Su Jin, and his subordinates arrived later and searched the Lava Field thoroughly. However, all they found was aftermath of the battle.

Like that, they wasted time for a long while. They had no choice but to go back while consoling their bitterness. They were also seriously concerned about Vulcan’s strength, which far surpassed their estimates.

‘Should we continue to chase this bastard, or... Could it be that this bastard is beyond us?’

Bae Su Jin was all excited and came after Vulcan only because they thought he was an easy prey, a bastard who just lost the newbie sticker and does not have any backings by anyone.

However, now that Bae Su Jin confirmed the aftermath of Hellmout and mages all slaughtered in a single battle by Vulcan, they could not help but to reconsider.

‘Uuu... Maybe we rattled up the wrong guy...’

Rex Ruburo anxiously spent the time worrying when the bee hive that he rattled will come back to haunt him.

Meanwhile, Vulcan, who was at Earth, had no idea about this.

He merely spent each day away. Vulcan only looked forward to the day he could go back to Act 2 and pay them back with vengeance.

# Chapter 88 - The Final Piece

---

It was during a relaxing afternoon.

Vulcan was sleeping until his body got all stretched out from having slept for so long. He suddenly got up and stretch-yawned.

“Huuuuuuuaaaaaaaaaammmmmmmm.”

It was a lazy sound that could have never come from Vulcan if this was Asgard.

It was one of examples that showed how idle and unguarded lifestyle Vulcan was leading here nowadays.

However, doing so was not causing any problems for Vulcan.

In this place, at Earth, there was no Bae Su Jin who had been chasing Vulcan with bloodshot eyes with desire to dissect him, and there were no Chimeras either. There were no monsters who attacked unprovoked either.

It was quite literally a perfect peace.

For Vulcan, who had a life that was stained in endless battles, it could be said that this was a vacation that came after several decades, although he was not exactly sitting around just playing and eating.



“Mr. Vulcan, we will be in your debt again today.”

“Um... All right.”

It had been 35 years since Vulcan left Earth and went to Asgard's Act 2.

Seven long years had passed on Earth as well. However, that was too short of a period to rebuild the world that was destroyed by the Demon Force.

In particular, in South Korea, because this was where the Demon Force arrived first, the destruction was obviously most severe here. With most of the production systems lost, the people of South Korea could not help but to struggle in rebuilding the country.

Jun-ra county was the area that happened to have suffered relatively smaller destruction, so the rebuilding effort had been continuing with the county as the center. However, it could not be helped that the speed was going at a snail pace.

Frustrated himself, Vulcan started to help out by clearing debris of broken buildings. Before long, he started help out in the rebuild efforts in regular basis.

‘Honestly... All of these are for nothing, but...’

In the end, once Vulcan cleared Act 2, all of these were going to be resolved single handedly.

It could be said that all of these were utterly pointless. However, Vulcan was not so heartless that he would just watch the people working so hard on rebuilding the country.

Dudududududuk.

“Oh, you are the best, Savior!”

“You got rid of so much of the rubbles at once...!”

“Please do not call me Savior. It’s really awkward for me to hear that.”

Kwang!

As he said that, Vulcan moved and collected the rubbles at an area that had no use for anything. He had an uncomfortable look on his face. However, he felt good about hearing it.

It had been so long since he heard Korean language.

Also, it had been so long since he heard acknowledgement and praise from the people of his home world.

Although the people here thought Vulcan must be an alien from another world, that didn't matter to Vulcan.

To Vulcan, the hero who had been fighting the battles alone without anyone cheering for him for several decades, small praises and compliments like these were far more helpful to him than items dropped from killing monsters.

‘As I thought... People need to live with other people. I thought I got used to living by myself, but the sense of emotional security is vastly different.’

The fact that people were getting hope and able to smile from his actions...

They gave Vulcan a sense of fulfillment that was different from heading toward a greater height from slicing monsters and leveling up.

Of course, he was not spending the whole day on helping the rebuild efforts.

He helped out for an hour or two just for satisfaction. He spent most of the day training.

Sadly, the training was not very efficient.

It was not like there was anyone powerful here who could be his sparring partner. It was not like there was a good hunting ground

here either.

Also, he couldn't just use high level magic spells such as Thunder God Blade, Destructive Core or Ifrit's Fist at will either.

‘Two or three of Infinite Flame Orbs would be enough to obliterate an area that's the size of an elementary school's soccer field... If I used those kind of magic spells...’

Vulcan feared that it may vaporize a country or a continent.

In the end, all he could do was meditating like Dokgo Hoo and studying or practicing techniques like the Land-Fold which didn't damage Earth.

However, Vulcan didn't like these either.

To start with, Vulcan was the type that worked best when he had opponents to fight.

Without any sense of urgency, meditating or practicing Land-Fold for hundred days didn't lead to any improvement, not even by a rat's poo size.

‘Also... I am certain now. I have no talent for techniques like the Land-Fold.’

Although Vulcan felt this since when he was at the Lava Demon

Cave, he thought he had no talent for such techniques.

Because the Land-Fold was an incredible secret technique from the Blue Dragon, it did bring synergy effect to the battle. However, the full extent of the Land-Fold's versatility was supposed to be far greater.

If Vulcan's body worked well like he wanted with the technique, his combat strength could have doubled from before, however...

No matter how hard he practiced, Vulcan just could not use the Land-Fold at will like he could with other magic spells.

'Even if I could just use the Land-Fold twice in a row, that would be incredibly helpful, but... Ugh... What's the point of agonizing over this when it is not working. Let's just rest and think of this as a vacation.'

It's been six months since Vulcan arrived at Earth. In the end, Vulcan folded his thoughts on training or whatnot and had been resting absent-mindedly.

"Haha. Savior... No, Mr. Vulcan. Are you going to be lying around whole day again?"

"Ah... I think I'll have to replenish the power spent on helping out on the rebuilding work, so..."

"I see... You have cleaned so much of the rubbles. I guess it

cannot be helped that a lot of energy was spent.”

‘I am sorry. Actually, it is not really hard.’

It was just bothersome to do.

However, Vulcan could not let his thoughts known, so he made a haphazard excuse and sent away the leader of South Korea.

Like that, he went back to the thought he had been continuing for the past six months.

‘Bae Su Jin...’

Vulcan slightly cringed his face.

Thinking about it, Vulcan had escaped to Earth because of them.

He did deal a serious strike against the Bae Su Jin by summoning Yur Dong-bin, but that didn’t mean the bad blood between Vulcan and Bae Su Jin was over.

The cooling time for the Cross Dimensional Teleport Technique was one year. Five years would have passed by then in Asgard when Vulcan returns. He would have no choice but to continue fighting against Bae Su Jin until he clears Act 2.

This meant that Vulcan needed a power that could overwhelm Bae Su Jin. However, let alone overwhelm, Vulcan was going to be fortunate if he could afford to avoid being their prey.

He thought about Hellmout who he ran into six months ago and crumpled his face.

‘I am at level 820. That bastard was at level 829, but... I didn’t think I would be pushed back, yet...’

Vulcan was aware that he himself was not an ordinary 820 level warrior.

Vulcan possessed Hero-rate Demi-god power. He even had the high-quality version of the Blue Dragon’s Breath. Moreover, he was certain that the set of equipment he had was superior to what most had in Act 2.

Despite all that, Vulcan could not beat Hellmout.

Although it was just for a while, Vulcan was overwhelmed by the power that resulted from evil and bizarre methods unique to Bae Su Jin.

Of course, it probably was not like there were unlimited number of high level mages who appeared to be sacrifices. However, it felt like the overflowing confidence that Vulcan had ever since he became a Demi-god had been cut a little.

It was quite obvious that the other bosses in the Bae Su Jin, including their Commander, were able to bring out power beyond their levels.

‘Of course... You guys are not the only ones who can, but...’

If Bae Su Jin was resorting to such power, Vulcan also had a way.

Above all, the Cross Dimensional Teleportation Technique was confirmed to be able to break through the interference that Bae Su Jin spread against the return scroll. With that, Vulcan could say that his safety was about half guaranteed.

Vulcan used his hands as the pillow and lay down in comfortable position. He looked at the sky.

He put aside headache-inducing topics for a moment. This was a time of peace that came after a very long time, so instead, Vulcan decided to try putting effort into enjoying the moment.

Although this was not the intent, this was a real rest that came after many decades of hardship.

There was no need for Vulcan to stay in alert whole day and suffer while agonizing over things.

Vulcan slowly closed his eyes and try to take a nap.



Even in comparison to the inn at Espo City, a non-combat area, it felt far more peaceful and relaxing here.

\*

Like that, Vulcan enjoyed peaceful life for five months.

Vulcan was slowly preparing his mind to go back to Act 2. However, something strange was detected in Vulcan's senses.

Vulcan was at Earth for the past eleven months. It was an ominous sensation that he had not felt in the past eleven months, not even once.

Vulcan muttered words unconsciously.

“... What's this?”

Vulcan got up right away.

He closed his eyes and focused to feel the energy that was agitating his senses.

It was hidden, but he could feel the energy of demons.

It was the kind that he could feel only from something like the demons from the Lava Demon Cave. It was ominous and

horrifying. The sensation was giving Vulcan goosebumps on his entire body.

Vulcan quickly got out of the building.

“Uh? Mr. Vulcan. Where are you going all of sudden...”

“I don’t have the time. I’ll be gone for a bit.”

Pazuzuzuzuzuk

Kwakwang!

Vulcan activated the Thunder God’s Might. In powerful steps, Vulcan rushed to Seoul in maximum speed.

It seemed Vulcan was not satisfied with the speed. He even transformed into the Lightning Spirit Form and got to the destination as fast as he could.

Vulcan got to Seoul at an instant.

Vulcan disengaged the spirit form. He then looked around the area and confirmed nothing in particular changed. Vulcan sighed in relief.

‘Huuu. Looks like nothing big happened yet.’

However, Vulcan was certain about the situation that was about to explode soon.

He quickly got to the center of Seoul. He was trying to approach the portal that connected the demon's world to the human's world.

However, there were people who stopped him.

"This is a restricted area. Citizens are not allowed near this place."

"... Ah."

Vulcan mumbled vacantly.

He looked at the American soldiers standing in his way. Vulcan turned his gaze and looked at his own getup.

He was wearing jeans, running shoes and an ordinary t-shirt.

'I can see why he didn't recognize me.'

Vulcan opened the inventory and brought out the equipment set. He used the SYSTEM and equipped them all at once.

Shuuuuuk

“Huk!”

The scene that Vulcan created just now was like a clip from a superhero movie’s transformation footage. The two soldiers panicked.

“It’s you, the Savior. The... because of your clothes...”

“It’s all right. Where is your Commander?”

The auto translated voice came through the SYSTEM.

Vulcan heard their explanation for a moment. He moved quickly and got to the front of the dispatched unit’s Commander.

“Huk! Ah, Savior. It’s a great day, isn’t it?”

Vulcan appeared out of the blue like a ghost. Tom Logger, the one in charge of managing the portal, welcomed Vulcan.

Ever since Vulcan helped the humanity’s resistance and destroyed the Demon Force seven years ago, Tom had been a fervent fan of Vulcan, the brave warrior from another world.

So, when Vulcan occasionally came like this out of the blue and

killed remnants of the Demon Force, Tom tried his best to make things as easy as possible for Vulcan.

“Hey, tell the entire dispatch this. Soon, it looks like the disgusting leftovers will pop out.”

Tom Logger ordered the adjunct and looked toward Vulcan with smiling face.

Whenever Vulcan came like this, small fry demons jumped out of the portal, so he was making preparations before it happened.

Grateful, Tom said to Vulcan,

“Haha. I cannot tell you in words just how confident we feel with having you always sensing the troubles before they happen and coming to warn us.”

It was not some meaningless formality. He was being sincere.

If it was like any other day, Vulcan would have responded with courtesy. However, the situation was a little different.

With stiff look on his face, Vulcan said to Tom Logger,

“Immediately...”

“Pardon?”

“Immediately, have all of your forces fall back. Get them as far away from here as possible.”

“... What do you mean by...”

Tom Logger didn't quite understand what Vulcan was saying. He blurred the end of his sentence and looked at Vulcan's face.

It had been almost one year since Vulcan came to Earth again. During that time, Vulcan had told Tom once or twice that the trouble to come could be a little dangerous.

When he said things like that, there really were more monsters than the usual that came pouring out of the portal. If Vulcan was not there, they could have suffered some casualties.

However, Vulcan never once said 'fall back' in such a serious tone before.

That fact made Tom panic, so that made Vulcan repeat it for the second time.

“I won't say it again. We don't have time. Hurry and have your forces fall back as much as you can.”

“... Yes, I understand.”

“I’ll help too.”

Tom Logger had many questions. However, he saw how serious Vulcan looked. Tom could not afford to just sit around and ask questions at the moment.

Aided by Vulcan’s magic, he quickly commanded the forces and finished preparation for the retreat. He also quickly had mechanized units such as tanks and armored vehicles to fall back as well.

However, despite Vulcan and Tom Logger’s quick responses, the trouble came exploding a tempo sooner.

Before all of the human’s forces could leave the place, the ground around the portal shook violently. Malevolent voice that nobody had experienced in Earth for the past seven years came to disrupt the ears of the people.

“Khuhahahahaha! I, the one who is beyond comparison to Nukuham, have arrived. Humans, prepare to serve me!”

Vulcan gulped and focused his gaze at the portal.

‘Here on Earth at least, I thought I would spend my days peacefully, yet...’

Vulcan thought that it seemed he was not destined for a comfortable life.



## Chapter 89 - The Final Piece (2)

---

Vulcan quickly prepared various magic spells including Destructive Core.

With eyes filled with regrets, he looked at Tom Logger and other soldiers.

Vulcan figured that he should at least have many spells cast and ready if getting all of the soldiers out was not possible.

‘If they get tangled up in the battle... then they will die anyway.’

However, a regret was, no matter how quick it was, still late.

Vulcan put his regrets behind. With bringing up the Thunder God’s Might as the last of his preparation, Vulcan moved to the front of the portal.

There was a giant demon who slowly showed himself through the portal.

The demon was smiling as if he was pleased. He was looking around as he smiled.

“Kuhuhuhu. You insects. You dare to try to attack me?”

The soldiers, who were trying to run, were shaking in fear and

despair. They couldn't dare to think about running now. They just plummeted where they stood.

Due to extreme fear, some even threw up or pissed their pants.

“ ... ”

However, the look on Vulcan's face was a little different from the rest.

He looked very disappointed about something.

With look of disbelief, Vulcan was using the SYSTEM to scan the demon's abilities.

[Count Bramhal, Demon Force Vanguard Captain]

[477Lv]

‘I got scared for nothing.’

Vulcan sighed in relief.

Having noticed Vulcan sighing, Bramhal was infuriated. He glared at Vulcan and pointed at Vulcan with his gigantic finger.

“You runt! I am infamous even in the demon world. You dare to sigh when I am standing before youuuuuurrrrrrrrrrrrk!”

[Your experience points went up by a small amount.]

Pasususususu.

Just like Nukuham, the one Vulcan fought last time, Bramhal was struck by the Ifrit’s Fist and lost his life.

Bramhal’s entire body became dust and got swept away by the wind. Watching this, Vulcan quietly muttered,

“I was not waiting for your arrival, you bastard.”

Uuuuuuuuung.

As soon as Vulcan finished saying that, the portal shook once again.

“Kickickic. It’s time to taste human blood!”

“Let’s pay them back for what happened seven years ago!”

“Kill them all!”

There were endless hordes of demons pouring out of the portal. Vulcan used the spells he had ready one at a time.

Each of the spells he prepared was for an opponent on par with Vulcan’s strength, so its power was absolutely astonishing.

With just one spell, several hundreds of demons died, and items started to pile up like mountains.

Vulcan started to lose the sense of urgency and alertness he had earlier. He was even yawning now.

Controlling the magic so it won’t destroy the ground was harder than killing the demons.

Having used all of the spells he prepared, Vulcan laid down Firefield around the portal.

Afterwards, again, endless hordes of demon forces came through the portal.

As they arrived, without knowing how or why, the demon forces became ashes and disappeared.

“Kiiiiiaaaaaaak!”

“Kuuuaaaaaak!”

[Your experience points went up by an infinitesimally small amount.]

[Your experience points went up by an infinitesimally small amount.]

...

[Your experience points went up by an infinitesimally small amount.]

It was like watching countless herbivore animals crawling voluntarily into the mouth of a tiger. The demons, as if they didn't value their lives, were continuously summoned through the portal and died.

Having witnessed this, the soldiers started to have lively looks flowing in their faces.

Initially, they were diligently retreating like they were ordered to by Tom Logger. However, when Count Bramhal made his entrance, they were petrified in terror. Afterwards, they were busy watching Vulcan's incredible feat that they lost the timing for running away.

In disbelief, the soldiers mumbled.

“That... that big one doesn’t die easily even after getting hit by tanks’ cannon fires, yet...”

“I know... Also, against so many of them, he handled them all by himself... As I thought, he is the Savior... He is incredible.”

“We are cheering for you! Vulcan! You are our world’s hero!”

Before anyone realized, the sense of terror disappeared as if it was washed away somehow. Now, the American soldiers basically became audiences to a spectacular show. They were cheering for Vulcan.

Although the reason was a little different for Vulcan, nevertheless, the demons dying continuously like this was quite enjoyable for Vulcan to watch.

It felt like the stress that only been piling up in him until now was being resolved at an instant.

It felt like a max level video gamer was coming to a newbie’s hunting ground and causing a ruckus.

On top of this, there weren’t any newbies swearing at Vulcan for doing so.

There were just people watching him. They were his fans and cheer squads. They were pouring out more cheers in excitement as he dominated the field.

Vulcan even forgot about the ominous sensation that he felt earlier. He just focused on slaughtering the demon forces.

‘Although I’m just an escapee from the Act 2 at the moment... At Earth, I am the max leveler!’

Whuwaaarurururururururuk

Kiiiiiaaaaaaak

Kyawaaaaaaaak

Like that, about one hour passed.

All demons that were summoned to Earth through the portal became dust and got scattered to the empty air. There weren’t any more demons coming out of the portal now. There was just a mountain worth of items piled up.

Vulcan opened the inventory and retrieved all of the small fry items.

Watching this, the soldiers cheered for the victory. Even Tom Logger, with relieved look after thinking the situation was over,

said to Vulcan,

“This definitely was a larger scale invasion than the usual... Mr. Vulcan, if you were not here, we would have been in a big trouble. On behalf of America, no, the world, thank you.”

With discipline, Tom Logger saluted.

However, the look on Vulcan did not ease up.

He didn't respond to Tom Logger's words. Instead, Vulcan continued to glare at the portal.

Malevolent energy could still be felt.

The energy was greater than the combined energy of all demons that came out so far, and Vulcan could feel that it was slowly approaching Earth.

‘I won't know for sure until it comes out, but... Ugh... I really hope it is not the Demon Lord.’

Vulcan hoped for this desperately.

If the bastard who was approaching the portal now was someone who rivaled the power of the Demon Lord, it was going to be impossible for Vulcan to fight using just his own strength. It meant Vulcan was going to resort to being on the run for one month until



the cooling time for the Cross Dimensional Teleportation to finally fill up.

Vulcan absolutely wanted to avoid things leading to that.

‘I hope it is someone I can handle by myself...’

With anxious gaze, he was glaring at the portal. A few seconds passed.

As if others noticed how anxious Vulcan looked, other soldiers, including Tom Logger, stared at the direction of the portal anxiously as well. An existence, who was being showered with everyone’s gazes, made the entrance.

A demon used his two hands and swept away the portal as if he was tearing down the portal as he came out of the doorway.

He had hardened body that looked as if a blade won’t penetrate if he was stabbed. He had large two horns. Also, he had a pair of wings. Watching the being who made the entrance, Vulcan unconsciously yelled,

“Uh!”

Vulcan looked as if he was glad to see this demon. It was like greeting a friend who Vulcan had not seen in ten years.

The demon looked exactly like Balgeram. Looking at the demon, Vulcan unconsciously used scan.

[Duke Balgerom, Demon Force Supreme Commander]

[827Lv]

‘Ah, he is not Balgeram. Of course. How is he supposed to escape from there.’

Balgerom looked so similar to Balgeram, so Vulcan mistook this demon for Balgeram.

Vulcan maximized the output of the Thunder God’s Might and got to front of Balgerom in heavy steps.

Vulcan had a faint smile hanging on his face. Depending on the interpretation, it could be a very unpleasant look to watch.

Also, Balgerom judged that the look on Vulcan’s face was that of belittlement. Balgerom looked around the area and said in majestic, powerful voice,

“You must be the rumored warrior. I’ve heard that you disappeared after destroying Nukuham during the first invasion, yet you returned and started to meddle again.”

“ ... ”

“On top of that, all of the subordinates under my command... You slain them all, every single one of them. Seriously.... Really...”

As he lowered his voice little by little, Balgerom lowered his head.

He looked like a crunching gargoyle statue. He had his arms wrapped around himself and was shaking. Watching Balgerom, Vulcan quickly used Land-Fold toward him.

Vulcan got below Balgerom’s chin in a blink of an eye.

Supporting himself on the ground with his upper body, Vulcan used both of his legs to kick Balgerom in full force.

“You infuriate.... Kuuuhurrrrrrk!”

Kwang!

Sustaining a huge shock, Balgerom’s magic spell was interrupted.

Balgerom was going to use a wide area effective magic and express his fury. However, instead of achieving his objective, he ended up in a pathetic state where he was being thrown off to the distance.

“Kuuuuk! You insect!”

Balgerom strained and forced his body to come to a stop. He opened his eyes big in anger.

In an instant, Vulcan already flew in and was there before Balgerom. Balgerom ground his teeth, but it seemed Vulcan could not care less.

Vulcan said in a calm voice,

“Although all of this will be resolved after I make the wish, but... Still, I can't stand still and do nothing if people are going to be killed in front of my eyes.”

“The wish? What load of bullcrap are you talking about! Kuuuuaaaaap!”

Belgerom had no idea what Vulcan was talking about.

However, he knew with certainty that Vulcan was no pushover. Belgerom also recognized clearly that the invasion will fail again if he could not defeat Vulcan.

Because of this, to use his most powerful technique, Belgerom shouted and focused his power. Using that huge collection of energy, he summoned the flame whip.

With just one swing of this whip, Belgerom could break apart a few countries as if he was cutting cupcakes. This was Belgerom's triumph card which contained incredible power.

However, to Vulcan, all this looked incredibly boring. He was sick of seeing this like a single play RPG game that he had beaten several dozen times.

Vulcan drew the blade from the sheath.

How Vulcan drew the blade was so swift and smooth that made one mistake and think Vulcan had been wielding it since the beginning of the battle.

Belgerom had a bad feeling about this. Right around when a thick shadow of anxiety was passing by Belgerom's face, Vulcan transformed into Lightning Spirit and quickly narrowed the distance.

The golden energy was so intense and powerful that it was blinding.

Belgerom was a Demon Duke. His name was a synonym for terror itself. However, he was even forgetting his pride in this very fact. Belgerom was swinging his whip with his face filled with fear. Vulcan, as if he was laughing at Belgerom's response, disappeared just before the whip could reach him.

Shuuuuuuk

‘What the... It was odd last time, but just h...’

Sugagak.

Belgerom was not able to finish the thoughts.

A powerful flash of light went through from the top of his head to the groin.

The strike was like the wrath of a god. Belgerom was done in defenselessly.

Even Belgeram, who had higher level than Vulcan, was helpless against the combination of Land-Fold and Thunder God Blade.

By this swift attack, Devil Duke Balgerom lost his life before having the chance to put up any decent fight. Instead, he became experience points and ended up aiding in the process of leveling up for Vulcan.

[Your experience points went up.]

[Level Up!]

[You defeated an opponent who is stronger than you!]

[You achieved an exploit.]

[Your exploit points will increase.]

“Ah, this guy had higher level than me.”

Vulcan was still at 821, so it seemed slaying Balgerom, who had the level of 827, lead to increase in exploit points.

‘Well, that’s good for me, although I had been stuck ever since I got to the Hero-rate.’

Feeling the joy, Vulcan felt the lingering sensations after the notification sounds of the SYSTEM.

It had been a while since Vulcan felt the joy from leveling up.

Moreover, there was the sense of accomplishment on the fact that he saved Earth with his own power. Combining the two factors together, Vulcan was in exceptionally good mood at the moment.

On top of this, although he obliterated countless demons, there was no casualty. It was literally an incredible accomplishment.

Vulcan flew through the air leisurely as if he was swimming and got to the portal.

The soldiers were not yet sure about what happened. They vacantly looked at Vulcan.

Tom Logger also had the same look on his face as he approached Vulcan, but he couldn't say anything. Vulcan, with serious look on his face, raised his hand and stopped him. This was why.

Like that, Vulcan looked at the portal for a moment.

Everyone held their breath and watched Vulcan.

“ ... ”

Although it was not long, but it felt like a very long time had passed.

Vulcan relaxed the stiff look on his face. He smiled big and said toward Tom Logger,

“I think we don't have to worry now.”

“Yeeesssssss!”

“We are saved! We are saved!”



“Kuhahahaha! As I thought!”

As soon as Vulcan said those words, cheers from the people exploded from everywhere.

Overjoyed, the soldiers were unable to stand still.

Usually, the dispatched unit soldiers were highly disciplined. However, at the moment, even Tom Logger, the one in charge of the unit, were shouting in joy as if he just got a shot of happy medicine.

“... Haha!”

Vulcan watched them and also broke into smiles.

Vulcan was drenched in desolate life in Act 2 for decades. Because of this, he had not laughed properly for dozens of years. Watching the people in joy made him actually laugh out loud. It had been so long since he laughed like this last time.

‘That’s right... This is how people should live.’

He watched everyone being happy and sharing this moment together.

Vulcan felt like the hardship he had endured up to this moment

was not some pointless grinding after all but worth something. It was to the point he could feel his eyes tearing.

Vulcan watched the soldiers being overjoyed for a moment longer. He then slowly got out of the scene and went to a quiet place.

He thought that he might actually cry if he stayed there a little longer. This was why.

‘It’s not like I cleared Act 2.’

At the moment, Vulcan didn’t really accomplished anything.

Vulcan thought that it would be embarrassing to be jerking tears in this situation.

However, it was quite difficult to suppress the emotion surging up. To calm his mind, he opened the inventory and checked the spoils he obtained today.

Wurururururururu.

Looking at items piled up like a mountain, Vulcan crumpled his face.

‘... Even at a glance, I think useless items make up 90% of them...’

The demons had levels far below the monsters of Act 2, so it could not be helped. However, he also could not help the sense of disappointment.

Still, he could not just throw away the items without checking them either.

Vulcan didn't have anything to do anyway. So, like a merchant who was thoroughly checking the goods, he approached the mountain of items to carefully check the items' options.

He had his gaze drawn by a dark red item that looked familiar.

## Chapter 90 - The Final Piece (3)

---

He almost didn't notice the helm.

It was the item that didn't drop despite Vulcan having tried over a hundred times to obtain it at the Lava Demon Cave.

It was no wonder why he was thinking 'it couldn't possibly drop this easily.'

However, the item definitely looked like a perfectly shaped helmet. On top of this, the sensation felt from it was on a whole another level from the rest of junk items. Having confirmed this, even Vulcan, who had experienced countless disappointments, could not help but to have high hopes.

Gulp...

Vulcan slowly picked up the helmet.

The options popped up in front of his eyes.

[Legendary-rate Armor (Set Item) – Devil Duke's Helmet]

[Level Limit: 800Lv]

[Mastery Limit: Fire Mastery SS or above]

Defensive power +812

Fire Element Resistance +10%

Fire Element Type Skill's Attack Power +5%

\*The helmet said to had been worn by a great ancient demon when he invaded the humanity. It proudly demonstrates its tough defensive power and fire resistance. By the helmet alone, its performance is subpar to other armors of same rate, but the effect that the wearer could gain after collecting all five of the item set is incredibly superb.

“Is it the genuine article...”

Vulcan muttered without realizing.

He repeated checking the item's name and options several times.

He was like a humble citizen who could not believe it even though he just won the lottery.

Vulcan wondered if he was dreaming. He was so unsure of it that he even tried slapping his own cheek.

Smack!

It was a powerful slap which contained the power of Demi-god. Vulcan's cheek felt like it was burning from the pain.

It had been a long time since Vulcan felt pain like this. However, instead of spoiling his mood, he was just feeling great.

The five armors of the Demon Duke set items.

Vulcan finally came to realize that he collected all of them.

“ ... ”

Vulcan brought the helmet right in front of his eyes and observed it carefully.

It looked horrific as if it was made from beheading a real demon.

However, to Vulcan's eyes, it couldn't look lovelier.

He could not help himself.

It was an item that he had completely given up because it refused to drop despite his dogged struggle in attempt to get it for ten years. However, now, the item dropped like how someone just ran into a bag full of money while walking down the street.

‘Is this a sign that things will work out well from now on... Well, something like that?’

Vulcan had bright face. It never looked brighter since he arrived at Earth.

Afterwards, slowly, with quivering heart, he put on the Demon Duke’s helmet.

After a moment, a notification sound rang around Vulcan’s ears.

Teeeriiing~

Listening to the pleasant sound, Vulcan slowly checked out the set items’ options.

[You collected all five of the Demon Duke set items!]

[The hidden effects of the set items are applied!]

Additional defensive power +1000

Additional fire element resistance +30%

Additional resistance of other elements +10%

Fire element type skill's attack power +15%

Fire element type training's efficiency +20%

Indestructible option applies when all of the Demon Duke's set items are worn together.

You can use Baloc's whip, a special skill.

You can use Disguise, a special skill

\*Baloc's whip – You can summon flame whip, the trademark weapon of duke demon Baloc. You can whip with it or throw it for damage.

\*Disguise – You can disguise yourself as a demon. It's perfect for when you want to hide your identity among demons.

They were incredible additional options.

Unable to shut his wide open mouth, Vulcan carefully read each option.

It was as good as wearing a Divine Legend rate item. The effect was that overwhelming. In fact, it was making Vulcan's head spin.



‘To think that options more brilliant than the Strengthened Heavenly Lightning Blade would result...’

In particular, Vulcan was more surprised that new skills were added.

Honestly, he was not sure about what to do with the Disguise skill, and it looked useless.

However, the Baloc’s Whip was something that Vulcan had experienced for over hundred times. Vulcan clearly remembered the whip’s power.

The whip had enough power to withstand the Destructive Core, one of Vulcan’s main techniques. Moreover, it was fire element type weapon, the elemental that Vulcan was most confident about.

It was obvious why Vulcan was so overjoyed.

‘This is no different than obtaining a Legendary rare flame magic for free!’

Vulcan was smiling so big that his cheeks were soaring to the sky.

He was so happy that he thought he couldn’t have been this happy if he collected all of the set items at the Lava Demon Cave where he was grinding away.

The situation now was like finding an ultra-elixir at a cave that he barely found while being on the run from ill fortunes and hardship, and that was amplifying his sense of bliss.

However, this was not the end of it.

Going beyond throwing Vulcan in to the state of bliss, another notification sound came, which made Vulcan almost die from being too overjoyed.

[You have slayed countless high demons. As the proof of your endeavor, you have achieved the great exploit of obtaining all of the Demon Duke Set.]

[You have achieved a great exploit!]

[Your exploit points increased by a large margin.]

[Your exploit rank increased.]

[Your current rank: Legend]

“... Am I dreaming?”

Vulcan looked like he lost his mind. Vulcan muttered.

He had vacant look on his face. He looked like someone who won two lotteries on a row.

Still wearing the Demon Duke Set, he plummeted.

He slowly calmed his mind.

“ ... ”

About five minutes passed.

Vulcan regained some grip on his mind and mumbled quietly,

“I wonder what would have happened if I didn’t come to Earth...”

It was not like he obtained enlightenment. It was not like he leveled up after hunting for several decades either.

He was merely sitting around his butt and doing nothing while waiting for the Cross Dimensional Teleportation’s cooling time to pass. Meanwhile, he just happened to have slayed a demon, yet his specs skyrocketed by the amount rivaling that of several decades of hard work.

Dumbfounded, Vulcan broke into hollow laughter.

“Hurhurhur...”

Of course, the laughter was full of joy.

Vulcan quickly got up.

As much as his equipment specs and Demi-god exploit rank increased, so did his confidence.

In that state, Vulcan thought about Bae Su Jin, the wretched cause that made him come to Earth.

Of course, he was not feeling thankful at all.

His head was merely filled with thoughts about how the fight from this point and on will be a little easier.

‘I have a month left... It’s not long.’

Vulcan thought about the day he will be returning to Act 2 as he repeated activating and disengaging the Thunder God Blade.

Picturing Rex Ruburo, the enemy he never even met, Vulcan sharpened the blade of vengeance.

\*

“Well then, I’ll get going now.”

Vulcan said with quiet look on his face.

Unlike his casual get up he usually wore, he was wearing the dark red colored Demon Duke Set.

Instead of a human being, it looked like a wicked demon was standing there. However, there was no trace of fear among the faces of the people who surrounded Vulcan.

It was obvious.

The man standing in front of their eyes was the Savior and Brave Hero who rescued their world twice despite the fact that he was not even an Earthling.

There were all sorts of people around Vulcan.

Children with drools coming out of their nose, middle aged people who appeared to be couples, young girls that made Vulcan think about his own little sister, and even elderly people...

There were countless people gathered there to see him off. Having realized this, Vulcan felt something rushing up in his heart.

It was warm and soft like being embraced by parents.

It was an emotion that Vulcan had never felt through the decades of endless battle. It was making Vulcan's face shake lightly.

'I had been thinking I was living my life alone, yet...'

Vulcan fell to a continent where he didn't know anyone.

When he thought he finally managed to come back to his home world, he had been fighting the tough fight again to resolve another calamity.

Vulcan had been walking the path filled with thorns. In the process, he had become very anxious.

He had been withstanding the heavy burden by his super human will power and his determination to save his family and his world. However, he was still a human being in the core.

It could not be helped that even Vulcan was feeling tired and lonely.

Because of this, the past one year of life at Earth was incredibly helpful for Vulcan's emotional security.

It was like the power of hope and encouragement from countless people that surrounded Fantaero the Brave Hero when he demonstrated his power. The past one year was a period with deep

meaning where Vulcan felt that he also had many people with him.

‘Although I am not a Brave Hero...’

The profession that Vulcan chose was Demi-god, not Brave Hero.

Because of this, Vulcan could not utilize the people’s encouragement as the power of the Brave Hero.

However, that was fine.

Knowing that the people of the lower dimension was cheering for him was enough.

Vulcan thought knowing that was going to be enough to make it easier for him to get through the journey to come.

“Hm Hm.”

There was a young man who approached Vulcan after doing some dry cough.

It was the man who was taking on the role of the president to lead the fraction of the South Korea’s population who survived.

He respectfully offered a handshake. Vulcan grabbed the man’s hand with a smile on his face.

The man said,

“We are sad to see you leave, but... It cannot be helped since you said there is something you have to do.”

“... Yes. It’s something that I must do.”

Going beyond just protecting the world, it was the only way that could turn back the calamity which already had occurred. Vulcan was talking about the wish.

To obtain the wish, Vulcan could not stay here and spend the time in peace anymore.

‘I rested for one year. That’s long enough. While I was at Act 2, except when I was traveling, I had never got to rest for over three days.’

The young man saw the determined look on Vulcan’s face. He was sad to see Vulcan leave, but he didn’t say any more words.

For the benefit of the country, and for the sake of the world, the young man wanted to have Vulcan tied down to Earth somehow. However, he intuitively realized that convincing Vulcan was not going to be possible.

After finishing the handshake, he took a step back and said one



last thing.

He was saying it on behalf of the hearts of all people on Earth.

“Thank you for everything you have done for us through all this time.”

“... I am also grateful.”

Vulcan said with a faint smile.

The young man was not sure what Vulcan was thankful about.

From the perspective of the humanity, Vulcan was a being who only gave and received nothing. Vulcan was the same as the Savior and Brave Hero.

However, regardless of the reason behind Vulcan’s words, the young man could feel deep in his heart the sincerity of Vulcan’s words. The young man tilted the tip of his mouth to smiled back.

However, before he could show the smile, Vulcan had disappeared without trace.

Shoooooooook

“Ut!”

“He disappeared!”

“Did he leave already?”

Vulcan disappeared as if he was never there in the first place.

Astonished, people muttered as they looked around.

The young man who represented the people was also shocked. He looked like he just saw a ghost as he looked everywhere. However, he couldn't find Vulcan either.

Vulcan already had moved to a far place that the people could not see.

‘... I guess this will be the last time I'll be seeing them.’

Although it only had been one year, Vulcan had grown fond of the people here. Because of that, instead of leaving without any words, Vulcan choose to have a send off with everyone. However, Vulcan was somehow embarrassed about using the Cross Dimensional Teleportation in front of them, so he moved to a different place.

‘Once I go back to Act 2, I'll be fighting bloody battles again. I don't want to teleport while being deep in sentimental mood...’

Vulcan looked at the people for a while longer and turned around. He flew to a desolate place, sat down and meditated to calm his mind.

His attitude, which had become quite relaxed over the year, was drawn tight again. He slowly shook off the remains of distracting emotions that were useless in combat.

Vulcan invested about an hour and completed the process. He opened his eyes and got up.

His eyes were gleaming with sharp definition.

Vulcan was exuding powerful intensity from his entire body.

With the Holy Power of Demi-god and the Demon Duke's wicked energy combined, Vulcan was exuding inexplicable atmosphere. Vulcan slowly became saturated in golden light.

“... It's a new beginning again.”

One year in Earth was five years in Asgard's time.

That's how long it took for Vulcan, the Brave Hero of Earth who possesses Demi-god's power, to return to Asgard.

# Chapter 91 - The Mage Swordsman Who Grinded For 100 Years

---

The place was full of flame and intense heat. It was the Lava Field.

There was hot lava flowing out as always from the volcano located at the center, making it difficult to breathe. The vicious and horrifying monsters, the kind that drank the lava as if it was water, roared violently as they lurked around the area.

Literally, the place was an extreme environment to be.

However, there were beings who were taking a leisurely walk around the field as if they were on a vacation.

“Huh... There are a lot more humans here than a hundred years ago. Did something happen...”

A young man with two small horns on his forehead muttered as if he was not expecting this.

The middle-aged man who was following the young man from behind replied respectfully.

He also had two horns. The horns were clearly letting it known to others that these two were not some ordinary human beings but instead the Dragonians.

“I think it must be because of what happened five years ago, Master.”

“Five years ago? Did something big happen?”

“I wouldn’t call it something big, but... There was a struggle between the humans.”

As if he was displeased, the young man crumpled his face.

He looked like he wished he didn’t hear it.

It was a prime example that showed just how ungenerous his opinion was toward the humans usually.

The young man said,

“Well, the humans fight amongst themselves all the time. What does that have to do with there being more humans here?”

“That is... There is a rumor going around about a hidden dungeon that was discovered while they were fighting amongst themselves. The rumor is that there is an incredible treasure there. There is also a story about a human who was only strong enough to hunt at the Lava Field. He went in there. When he came back, the story goes that he obliterated a part of the Bae Su Jin...”

“That means the hidden dungeon is in this place?”

“According to the people, that seems to be the case. If it is true, then it is an incredible opportunity. Greedy humans probably could not help themselves but to be drawn to it.”

“Hm...”

Having heard his pupil’s words, the Master nodded.

He was not all that interested in organizations made by humans. However, when it came to Bae Su Jin, the young man had some bad blood with the organization, so he was somewhat aware of them.

‘The bastards who won’t hesitate to do the most disgusting and violent things...’

To start with, he didn’t harbor good opinion about humans. However, this was especially true when it came to Bae Su Jin.

Going beyond toying with people’s lives, Bae Su Jin had been trying to use other beings as well. They were irredeemable butt monkey bastards.

If Bae Su Jin ever laid a hand on the Dragonians, he would have gathered up everyone he knew and destroyed the Bae Su Jin. However, that had not happened yet.

He stopped walking and brushed his chin.

Although he didn't have it now, it was a habit from the days when he did have the beard. This habit came out whenever a troubling thought occurred.

“He destroyed a part of Bae Su Jin by himself?”

“Yes. That's what the story is. However... Well, humans always exaggerate, so I do not know if it is true.”

“If it is true, then this hidden dungeon must really be an incredible opportunity. It is worthy of having other beings also interested in the place.”

Because the young man once watched one of the bosses of Bae Su Jin fight, he knew how strong Bae Su Jin could become if they were determined.

Going past the morals of their methods, when their strength was considered alone, the bastards belonged on upper range of the warriors in Act 2.

The young man thought the mystery warrior deserved the title of the strongest human if he really was able to fight such disgusting bastards by himself.

It seemed he was intrigued. The young man tossed an additional question.

“So, where is that amazing one? What’s he up to now?”

“I don’t know. There are a lot of rumors claiming he went in hiding in fear of Bae Su Jin or that the last battle left him critically wounded. However, there weren’t any information out there that are trustworthy.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes. This is as far as I know.”

The pupil, with curious look on his face, asked back,

“By any chance, are you interested in that human...?”

“No, I wouldn’t call it interest. I asked a little more just because Bae Su Jin was menti...”

The young man suddenly stopped talking.

As if he couldn’t understand something, he was staring at somewhere. Having noticed this, the pupil asked,

“Master, what is it?”



“Nothing. It’s just that some crazy bastard suddenly dove into the lava, so I was surprised.”

“Of the humans, who has naturally short life span, I’ve heard many of them commits suicide because they have grown tired of living so long.”

“I see. I’ve heard about that as well, but this is the first time for me to witness it.”

The young man shook his head left and right and added,

“As I thought, humans are full of bizarre bastards.”

\*

“Why are my ears so itchy? Are Bae Su Jin bastards trash talking about me? If it is not them, perhaps it could be the Chimera Maker.”

Vulcan, the one called as the Bizarre One by the Dragonian Master, dug his ear with his pinky and blew the content away.

“Uuzuzuza...”

Vulcan yawn-stretched big time and looked at the inside of the Lave Demon Cave which had red light lingering around.

The place was familiar. Vulcan was used to this place. Actually, it was more correct to explain that Vulcan was sick of the place.

After completing 25 years of training, Vulcan said to himself that he would never return to this place.

‘To think that I actually came back to this place again like this...’

“I guess you never know what can happen next in a man’s life.”

Vulcan muttered, opened the door and entered the inside of the dungeon.

Afterwards, as if it was only right, the Lava Demons gave him one hell of a welcome.

Vulcan was sick of seeing the demons. Looking at them, Vulcan sighed big.

“Huuuuu.”

Kuuuuuaaaaaaa!

“Yea, I’m also glad to see you rascals.”

Pazuzuzuzuzut

Vulcan used the Thunder God's Might immediately and cast Destructive Core and Thunder God Blade. Vulcan started to cook the Lava Demons.

When Vulcan came to the Lava Demon Cave for the first time decades ago, fighting just one of the Lava Demon was very difficult and put Vulcan on the edge of anxiety. However, now, Vulcan had become so strong that he could handle them without focusing much.

‘I definitely had become stronger.’

It was not like Vulcan had a big Enlightenment. However, the growth that came through small steps with level ups and examining internals had led to this much overall growth.

On top of this, ever since he visited Earth, his Demi-god's exploit rank had gone up by a rank. Moreover, he achieved astonishing upgrade on his equipment.

The armors Vulcan possessed now were so splendid that Vulcan thought no other items he could possibly come across in Act 2 in the future would tempt him.

With all of these combined, Vulcan effectively had obtained strength that could be declared as the greatest power among all humans in existence in all dimensions.

‘Still... It is still not enough. Not even close.’

While he was at Earth, Vulcan objectively compared the combat strength between himself and Bae Su Jin.

It was obvious, but Vulcan, who was alone, was far behind the combined power of Bae Su Jin.

Unless an amazing Enlightenment that leads to increase in rank for the Lightning or Fire masteries happened, it was almost impossible for Vulcan to destroy Bae Su Jin by his power alone.

He merely had a few items swapped, which was not enough to make up for the difference in strength between himself and Bae Su Jin.

‘Also, the Chimeras could show up and cause problem at any time. I need to keep this in mind.’

It’s been a long time since Vulcan ran into Chimeras, so it was to the point where Vulcan almost forgot about them. However, in fact, it was no exaggeration to say that this hardship started with the Chimeras.

Of course, the Chimeras were at 750 level at best. So, Vulcan thought there was no need to worry too much about them. However, Vulcan had to consider the rest of the Chimeras that he had not witnessed yet.

He could not ignore the possibility that there could be even stronger Chimeras or the Chimera Maker himself might show up.

Besides the Bae Su Jin, there were many of other nobodies and unknown garbage organizations who were targeting him.

To think negatively, Vulcan's current situation was a dire one with no end of troubles at sight.

‘In this situation, finding a higher-level hunting ground and training there? In a place that's open in all sides where anyone could approach me, at an ordinary field full of danger where I can't even be protected by the Gods? No way.’

Therefore, Vulcan had no choice to make the decision.

Of all places, this was the only safe place with highest level monsters.

As long as he invested a long time, he could expect level ups, although at a slow pace. Moreover, this place was like a mine for obtaining huge quantities of Vitality Marbles.

At Lava Demon Cave, which was a one-person only hidden dungeon, Vulcan decided to try grinding for 100 years to for the Vitality Marbles.

One year ago, in Earth's time, Vulcan witnessed the move by Yur Dong-bin during the battle against Hellmout. Vulcan still could not

forget the eight swords that shined in blindingly bright blue.

The tremendous difference in power was not something that Vulcan could catch up to with items or boosts.

Fighting against foes that Vulcan was having great difficulties, Yur Dong-bin quickly neutralized them as if he was twisting the wrists of little children.

Watching Yur Dong-bin, Vulcan thought he won't have to be on the run if he possessed such power. Afterwards, Vulcan came to the conclusion that, 'then just collect enough Vitality Marbles so you can borrow his strength whenever you want as often as you want. After that, as soon as you leave this place... go destroy Bae Su Jin bastards with Yur Dong-bin's power.'

This was Vulcan's plan. Although very simple and crude, it was definitely an effective plan.

Obviously, to collect such amount of Vitality Marbles, Vulcan needed a long time.

It was going to be grueling and boring. It was as obvious as watching the fire spread.

However, Vulcan didn't just have his own life at stake. The situation had his family and his world on the line.

Vulcan's perseverance and sense of responsibility were not so

weak that he couldn't even handle such pain.

‘Even if I consider all potential dangers... Hundred years is probably enough.’

With that many Vitality Marbles, Vulcan could summon two of the Greatest Battle-god if that was possible. The capability would place Vulcan at a position where he could leisurely handle any attack from anyone in Act 2.

It was going to be like playing an RPG game with invincibility cheat key activated!

To bring about such a dream like condition, Vulcan had chosen to crawl back to this demon cave, which he was so sick and tired of.

‘Ugh... Even though that's true... I still don't like doing this.’

Regardless of how strong Vulcan's determination was, it could not be helped that he was not feeling great about grinding for 100 years, which was a long time.

Vulcan was feeling extremely gloomy.

It was to the point where he wanted to go to a pub, grab a random person and complain about the predicament he is in for the whole day.

However, in the end, Vulcan had to do this.

With tired look on his face, Vulcan retrieved the items dropped from slaying the monsters earlier. With heavy steps, he walked to the inside of the dungeon.

While at it, he bit on a piece of bread he purchased at the Espo City. He opened the inventory and checked all items he was going to use through the grinding.

‘I have about 150 years’ worth of food... I was almost out of potions, but I cleaned the store of all potions from Mr. Fowaru’s General Store, so I won’t have to worry about running out.’

Before entering the Lava Demon Cave, instead of going through the street vendors and auction site, Vulcan handled the miscellaneous trades through the help of Fowaru. It was such a bother to turn the items into money and use the money to buy potions. Vulcan was also concerned about his whereabouts being made known to Bae Su Jin through such channels.

‘Of course. Now that I arrived here safely, it won’t matter if information got to them or not.’

Kuuuuaaaaak

Kiiiiaaaaak.

“Ah, they are popping out already. Disgusting bastards.”



Vulcan saw two Lava Demons popping out. He calmly cast the Destructive Core.

Afterwards, he quickly launched it toward one demon's head.

Kwaaaaaang!

Kuuuuuuurrrrrk.

Now, even with two of them coming at Vulcan at once, Lava Demons were no match for Vulcan.

To him, the Lava Demons no longer invoked any sense of urgency.

They were just sources for producing items called Vitality Marbles.

Kwakwakwakwang!

Kwaaaaaaak.

Kwuuuurrrrrr.

Deafeningly loud noises exploded one after another in the Lava Cave.

Like that, the first day in Vulcan's '100 Year Grinding Plan' commenced.

\*

Meanwhile, around the same time, at the Fowaru's General Store...

Usually, the store was busy with customers. However, unlike the usual, the inside could not be quieter.

There was an obvious reason for this. The main product in his store was the potions that Fowaru created, which was extra effective.

Vulcan purchased all of them. Not just ones on the display, but even the ones in the backroom. There was no way for Fowaru to continue the business at the moment.

Fowaru placed a sign that stated he will be taking a break for a while, and the complaints from the customers exploded. However, it could not be helped.

'Also... That's not what I should be thinking about right now.'

Fowaru was sitting at the store's second floor.

He gulped at looked at the four items on the table.

“ ... ”

The dark red items exuding treacherous sensation felt like they were trying to tempt him.

There were four pairs of boots. They had exact same designs as if they were printed from a factory. Fowaru looked over the boots. There was greed in his eyes that could not be hidden.

# Chapter 92 - The Mage Swordsman Who Grinded For 100 Years (2)

---

‘It’s hard to resist.’

He had no reason to resist.

Of course, he knew that these items were no ordinary kind.

They looked far more dangerous than the goods he could usually get. The energy felt from the boots was thick and evil as if they were really supposed to be worn by demons. The energy was poking at Fowaru’s skin.

However, he couldn’t hesitate about absorbing them because of that either.

It’s been a while since he got Legendary-rate items like these. On top of that, these appeared to be on the high-end of the armor class.

If he just enjoyed them with his eyes only, then he would not be called Fowaru the ferocious eater.

He slowly put his hands toward the boots.

He picked up one of the Duke Demon Boots and brought it toward his gigantic mouth.

‘I wouldn’t succumb to its energy, right?’

The thought crossed his mind. However, he decided to eat it anyway.

Unlike other ferocious eaters, Fowaru had suppressed his instinct for over thousand years.

If he was so weak minded that he would have succumbed to this level of malevolent energy, then Fowaru would have gone insane long time ago and ran amok, meeting his end by the hands of the Act 2’s managers.

Fowaru opened his mouth wide.

Using his razor-sharp teeth, he started to chew and eat the item.

Wazak... wazak...

Wuguzuk...

His mouth continued to move.

He had satisfied smile.

He looked like a homeless who got to have a lavish meal for the

first time in his life. He appeared to be in the state of bliss as he ate the Duke Demon's Boots.

He was being extremely careful so that he won't drop even a small scrap of the item.

In an instant, he finished eating the entire boots. He sighed big.

"Huuuuuaaaa!"

He was as satisfied as he was back in several decades ago, when Vulcan brought the Legendary-rate bow.

His big smile tore open his mouth to the sides.

'No... This is even better than that. The taste is powerful, and thrilling... No, it is violent!'

He could still feel the thick taste of the boots in his mouth. He plummeted at the sofa.

Completely relaxed, it looked like he was getting sucked into the sofa.

For a while, he couldn't get a grip. He looked like a drug addict experiencing high. His face looked like a fool.

It was different from the fake persona he showed to others. It was completely different from his true vicious and violent self.

In such abnormal state, Fowaru spent quite some time. He then suddenly got a grip and stood up.

He looked shocked. It was like a spring jumping up.

It seemed he was experiencing panic, anxiety, greed and hesitation. His face was in chaos as he looked at the remaining boots. Fowaru thought,

‘Huh... Its evil energy is far stronger than I thought. If anything went wrong, I would have lost my mind.’

It was a dangerous situation where he could have lost everything from a moment of indulgence when he had been restraining himself so well for all this time.

It seemed he was determined. With serious look on his face, he picked up the other three pairs of boots and put them in his special storage room.

It looked like he was finally about to calm down a little. He sighed in relief.

He shook his head left and right and said to himself,

“To digest this completely... I think it will take over 10 years.”

Fowaru closed his eyes and thoroughly checked the condition of his body.

Incredible energy entered his body all of sudden.

He wanted to digest this lingering energy in whole immediately. However, unfortunately, this humungous energy contained perilous evil energy.

The malicious energy could have shaken his powerful mental strength temporarily and drove him to the state of a mindless beast.

To perfectly suppress this scheming energy and absorb it, he needed a long time and considerable patience.

‘Of course, someone like me should be able to more than handle this as long as I don’t eat many of them.’

Fowaru was of different caliber from other ancient ferocious eaters whose instincts came before their ability to reason and repeated indiscriminate consumption and slaughter.

Fowaru’s mental strength to restraint himself was way beyond the others. Through this, he had endured the temptation for over a thousand years.



If he couldn't even resist the temptation of the Duke Demon's Boots, he couldn't have made this far.

'I'll absorb them one at a time every 15 years.'

Having thought this far, he promptly stopped thinking about the Duke Demon's Boots.

He then thought about the man who brought these items to him. Fowaru crumpled his face.

'That bastard...!'

Fowaru was extremely shocked to see Vulcan when he visited the store again.

He appeared to have grown substantially stronger than before.

Vulcan was not showing off his power at the moment, so Fowaru could not tell exactly, but Fowaru's sharp senses were telling him that Vulcan's abilities were beyond comparison to his former self.

'Bae Su Jin... I've heard that he survived the violent battle against them, but... This is above my expectations.'

Of all beings, humans were the beings with lowest potential for growth.

Of the humans, the Players were infamous for lacking talent. Vulcan's growth rate was defying the common sense. It was unbelievable that Vulcan was in fact a Player.

Of course, thanks to this, Vulcan survived without being hunted down by other bastards. This was a good thing for Fowaru, who was also interested in catching Vulcan. However...

‘Now that he had gotten this strong... I guess this means I should assume that catching him through normal methods will be impossible.’

To start with, now that a gigantic organization named Bae Su Jin butted into the battle to hunt down Vulcan, a lot of Fowaru's plan had gone wrong. Also, a bigger variable was now introduced to the plan. However, Fowaru had no intention of giving up Vulcan.

Fowaru was an ancient ferocious eater. He was like the god of greed. He was born with the blood of starving demon.

He hated losing the prey he had in mind. It was the third thing he hated the most with death and starvation being the first two above this one.

This was why he was squeezing his brain to come up with a way to snatch up Vulcan when the situation now was looking desperate and warranted only a slim chance.

‘Should I have just ambushed him when he visited here... No. That’s nonsense. As I thought, perhaps I should aim for an opportunity in middle of battle between Vulcan and Bae Su Jin...’

Fowaru agonized over this, and he agonized over this some more afterwards.

However, no matter how hard he thought about it, nothing definite was coming to his mind. Thinking about it must have made him feel stressed.

“Kuuuuaaaaaak!”

Fowaru screamed. Frustrated, he opened the storage room, brought out a suitable item and munched on it.

However, such an item was not enough to quench the frustration in him which had caught on fire.

“...”

After seething in anger for a long while, Fowaru slowly looked at a corner.

There were the three items he shoved deep in the storage because he was concerned he might keep on thinking about it.

As if he was possessed, Fowaru was approaching the items. He

suddenly gasped for air, pulled himself together and slapped his own cheek hard.

Chulsuk

“You foolish runt! It hasn’t even been that long since you decided not to, yet already!”

Fowaru criticized himself big time. With exaggerated motion, he got out of the storage room and locked the door. He actually just got out of the store.

It was because the dark red boots kept on tempting him. They were lingering in his head.

Fowaru got out of the store and breathed in fresh air. He quietly muttered,

“... First, I think I should calm down for a while.”

Fowaru firmed his faltering mind and walked the Espo City’s street.

He was thinking about getting together with his acquaintances for a drink to tame his mind.

His face was hardened, but now, warm smile started to flow there. Before long, Fowaru became a merchant with good-natured

looking face.

His steps headed to the pubs.

\*

20 years passed since Vulcan came back to the Lava Demon Cave.

He hunted the Lava Demons, made time for meals, and went back on sweeping off the Lava Demons before resting for a bit. Vulcan repeated the routine throughout his days in the cave.

He was spending the days like a loser at a game workshop. Feeble voice could be heard from his mouth.

“I am sick of this...”

Same appearance, same roar...

The monsters were charging at him with same pattern. Vulcan was sick of seeing their faces.

Because he was so used to them, he couldn't even train, and he couldn't get much experience points either.

He was incredibly bored. The situation now could not be compared to how it was back in the days when Vulcan trained here

during his first visit.

However, he had to.

That's what grinding was.

Vulcan swiftly moved his body and avoided their attacks.

Swaaaaaak

Wheec

The two Lava Demons were pouring out sharp attacks. They were enough to make one's face turn pale. However, that was true only for those who encountered them for the first time.

Now, Vulcan had piled up experiences equaling slaying several hundred thousand of them. He was so bored that he was about to yawn.

With sleepy eyes, he glared at one of the Lava Demons and extended out the Thunder God Blade.

Compared to Vulcan's usual exhilarating speed, it was so slow that it looked like Vulcan was dying from boredom.

However, despite the blade coming in so leisurely, the tip of the

blade was placed at the Lava Demon's critical point.

Surguk...

Kwuuuuurr!r!

The cut was so deep that it was almost made the demon's head just hanging by the threads.

It was an incredible sight to watch. It seemed Vulcan knew every little detail of the demon's moves.

If there was someone watching this, Vulcan would have received applause.

However, this was a hidden dungeon with one-person limit. There were only two fully intelligent beings here, just Vulcan and Balgeram. Also, Balgeram was currently dead, killed by Vulcan's hand. Balgeram was currently in the pathetic state of waiting for the regeneration period to pass.

'Wait, is that not right? Was today the day of his regeneration?'

Kwaaaang!

Kwuuuuuuuuuuuuak!

While Vulcan was thinking about such useless things, he was not feeling any sense of danger from the battle.

He used the Destructive Core and easily cleaned up the remaining Lava Demon. He marched forward to find the next prey.

“I’m so sick of this. So sick of this. I’m so so sick of this.”

Vulcan couldn’t stop muttering about how he was sick of this.

However, unlike his words, he was chopping down the Lava Demons and collecting the Vitality Marbles very diligently.

Actually, Vulcan wasn’t being serious with his words.

Around the ten years point, Vulcan had been spitting out ‘I’m so sick of them’ from bottom of his heart. However, now, it just became a habit. It was like an old man saying ‘I’ll die when I’m old.’

Nowadays, when Vulcan got bored, he even sang the phrase as if it was the theme song for his labor. Vulcan’s life had reached such state.

‘Of course... I am still sick of this, but...’

He was grinding away out of habit. It was not like he got used to the boredom.



After all, how could a human being get used to boredom?

He continued because he had to. If he rested for the day, then he was going to have to stay in this place for a day longer, so he was forcing himself to continue. The thought of wanting to just run out of this place had never left Vulcan's mind.

However, Vulcan knew better than anyone that he couldn't.

Vulcan slapped his cheeks with his two hands and grabbed a hold of his faltering resolve.

Like that, again, Vulcan spent the day as always like a forced labor at a coal mine. He was enduring yet another tough day.

Ududududuk

Kwang!

Kiiiiiaaaaak

Pacuzuzuzuzuk

Surguk

Kutuk... Kuk

Countless Lava Demons were either pancaked by the Destructive Core or had their head chopped off by the Thunder God Blade.

In addition, Baloc's Whip was swung once in a while as practices.

The Lava Demon Forces were being cleaned off like fragile autumn leaves in the wind, and Vulcan watched them with emotionless eyes.

Vulcan stopped walking. He was at the end of the Lava Demon Cave.

He arrived at the Repent Room where Belgeram the Demon Duke, the boss monster of this place, was at.

Although it was only a little bit, there was a bit of vitality going through Vulcan's eyes.

"Is the regeneration... complete? I don't know. I'll know once I enter."

If Balgeram was not there, Vulcan just needed to get out of the room.

Vulcan kicked opened the boss room's door and looked inside the stone room.

...

Fortunately for Vulcan, Balgeram was regenerated.

Like always, he was sealed. The Duke Demon Balgeram was glaring toward Vulcan.

Vulcan was feeling a lot better. He called Balgeram in loud voice,

“Hey! I wondered what I was going to do if you had not been regenerated yet, but you were already here? I’m so glad!”

Glad? What’s there to be glad about! Just when are you going to leave this place!

Belgeram’s voice was full of fury. It completely filled the stone room.

However, Vulcan could not care less.

It was obvious why Belgeram hated Vulcan. Like a clockwork, Vulcan came and sliced and diced every time Balgeram was regenerated.

Vulcan thought he would have felt and acted the same as Belgeram if he was in Belgeram’s shoes.

However, that didn't matter at all to Vulcan.

To Vulcan, what mattered was that he could face another intelligent being.

Besides Dokgo Hoo, the one who Vulcan summoned once in a blue moon, Belgeram was the only other conversation partner that Vulcan had, so Vulcan was happy to talk to him.

“I'm sorry... I think I'll have to stay here for a bit longer. It is not like me, but I lied. I am sorry.”

If you really are sorry, then show it through your action instead of words!

“What kind of action?”

Get lost.

“I am sorry... but there are too many bastards out there who are out to bite me. While I raise up my power, let me be in your debt for a while here.”

Infuriated and about to lose it, Belgeram shouted.

Then go play with the Lava Demons outside! Why are you keep on showing up here as if you are glad to see me! What's this bull-crap!

“Um... I don't have anyone besides you for a conversation here... So, can we talk for five more minutes before starting? That procedure or whatnot.”

Listening to Vulcan's utter nonsense, Balgeram's face petrified like a statue.

Dumfounded, he glared at Vulcan. It seemed Balgeram resigned himself to the fate. He closed eyes.

‘Looks like he had gone completely nuts from being trapped here for so long.’

# Chapter 93 - The Mage Swordsman Who Grinded For 100 Years (3)

---

Belgeram realized that words were useless to Vulcan, so he ignored Vulcan.

Belgeram opened his mouth and started the process.

I am the infamous demon from Elumhal, the 429<sup>th</sup> Dimension...

There were times when Belgeram occasionally recited the words slowly to anger Vulcan. However, he didn't do it this time.

Instead, he recited the words rapidly like a machine gun. It seemed like he just wanted to finish this quickly.

As he recited the words, Belgeram thought,

‘I think I should just die quickly.’

Although Belgeram thought Vulcan must have gone insane, Belgeram himself could not be considered in the right mind either.

“Ah, what are you doing? I am sorry. I told such bad jokes.”

Vulcan felt anxious.

Unlike other monsters, Belgeram could talk. It was fun for Vulcan to tease him. Belgeram was like the source of energy in Vulcan's dreary life of grinding.

This was why he tossed useless words and watched Balgeram's response. Having realized Belgeram completely ignored it, Vulcan panicked a little.

“Hey, are you mad? I am sorry. I had gone a little insane because I was trapped here for so long.”

Now, Vulcan was even trying to lull the Duke Demon.

However, Belgeram was so sick of Vulcan. He completed the process without giving Vulcan any response. Instead, Belgeram charged at Vulcan immediately.

Wheeeooooong

Belgeram quickly swung his fist toward Vulcan.

Fearsome flame lingered around his fist. It was hard to dodge, and it was very powerful.

However, Vulcan, the one who was facing this attack, didn't appear to be panicking at all.

The attack was powerful. However, Vulcan had experienced this punch several thousand times already.

There was no reason this attack to be tricky for Vulcan to deal with.

‘Although it is not as much as the Lava Demons, I am quite used to you too.’

Vulcan instantly used the Lightning Dragon Step to the maximum and dodged Belgeram’s fist.

Afterwards, Vulcan charged into Belgeram in exhilarating speed as he gathered substantial amount of mana on his left hand.

Vulcan’s powerful one-punch followed.

The fist was surrounded by violent lightning sparks. The sparks looked like they were going to erase everything around from existence. The fist flew toward Balgeram’s stomach.

Belgeram quickly used his other hand and defended himself. However, because Vulcan’s fist was strengthened with lightning magic, Belgeram couldn’t withstand it without taking damage.

Kuuk!

Because of the energy from the lightning pierced through his



guard, Belgeram's body was stunned for the instant.

Aiming for this moment, Vulcan's Thunder God Blade was swung from below like a lightning strike.

Vulcan's blade was held in reverse. The intensity felt violent as if the blade was going to cut Belgeram's chin in half.

However, Belgeram freed himself from the stun effect just before the blade struck him. He tilted his head to the side and managed to avoid the danger by a hair. He promptly summoned his flame whip, hell fire demons and everything he could bring out. Sparing nothing, Belgeram violently resisted.

Vulcan's eyes gleamed from watching this.

'In the past, I don't think he was able to response so quickly like this...'

When it came to flame magic, Belgeram blocked them with ease. However, when Vulcan focused on lightning magic like earlier, which had stun effects, Belgeram used to have a hard time.

It seemed like Belgeram became good at handling this as well.

It appeared that Belgeram became somewhat adapted at fighting Vulcan just like how Vulcan was used to Belgeram's combat style.

Of course, that didn't lead to something like Vulcan having a tough time fighting against Belgeram.

Compared to the past, Vulcan now possessed substantially superior armors. Also, Vulcan had been leveling up little by little as well.

The gap between the two had only been widening, not the other way around.

After a bit of time passed, as usual, Belgeram lost his head and met his end.

Before he died, Belgram spat out words full of curses.

You son of a bitch...!

[Experience points went up.]

[You defeated a foe who is more powerful than you!]

[You cannot gain exploit points because you slain this boss monster before.]

“... Did he have a lot of resentment piled up?”

Vulcan quietly muttered as he watched Balgeram's corpse disappear slowly.

Belgeram was the one who always got killed, so it was obvious why he hated Vulcan. However, Vulcan wanted to be a close friend to Belgeram.

It was because he wanted to console his boredom and loneliness, even if it was a little bit.

To do that, Vulcan no longer showed animosity after entering the boss room. He once just stood there and did nothing. However, the hidden dungeon was not so lenient.

By the rule, the boss monster had to attack no matter what if someone entered the room.

Because of this, the peaceful situation that Vulcan hoped for could never be created. Instead, Vulcan had to settle for having a brief conversation with Balgeram once a month and try to refresh his mood with just that.

Step... Step...

Vulcan walked toward the item that Balgeram threw up.

Before he even used the SYSTEM to check the equipment's options, Vulcan crumpled his face big time.

It was because an item that he didn't really want showed up.

In the past, it was the item that Vulcan desperately wanted. However, now, just looking at it made him feel frustrated to no end.

Shady dark red color with crimson light lingering about... Vulcan was frustrated after seeing the ominous helmet. Vulcan brushed his hair back in frustration.

'Is it just mocking me now... Nowadays, only this shows up.'

Eight.

That was the number of helmets that Vulcan collected while being in the Lava Demon Cave for the past 20 years.

Before this, when Vulcan grinded for 10 years in attempt to get this item, it never dropped once, and that rotted his heart out of frustration. Now, as if the leftover items were pouring out, this one particular kind of item kept on popping out. Obviously, Vulcan was not in a good mood.

'Well... Although it is not the item I want in particular...'

Vulcan carelessly tossed the Duke Demon's Helmet into the inventory and looked below at his own equipment. He went over

them one at a time.

He had the Strengthened Heavenly Lightening Blade as the weapon. As for armors, he had the Duke Demon's Set.

He already had all the greatest equipment. Hence, it didn't really matter what kind of item Belgeram threw out at Vulcan.

However, even so, it could not be helped that Vulcan didn't feel great about this.

Vulcan's crumpled face showed no sign of relaxing.

'When Balgeram gets regenerated next time, I think I should vent my anger at him or something.'

Vulcan walked out of the round stone room as he thought about things that would throw Balgeram in to a state of panic.

Vulcan went back to the beginning of the Lava Demon Cave and hunted regenerated monsters like a machine.

[Experience points went up.]

[Experience points went up.]

"It's a great harvest today as usual. Of course, it is always great.

I'm so sick of it. So sick of it. Even though the harvest is great as usual, I am still sick of it."

Vulcan picked up the Vitality Marbles which were dropping like rain and repeated muttering by himself.

It was his tearful endeavor to withstand boring labor.

\*

Another 30 years had passed. Now, it had been 50 years since Vulcan came back to the Lava Demon Cave.

Throughout the years, Vulcan had become even more grumpy.

He was still doing the grinding work. However, gradually, he took longer breaks. He was sick of the work, and he was lonely. Those feelings got worse with time.

As an obvious measure to endure this, Vulcan called Dokgo Hoo more frequently.

Vulcan gave Kina Kina some Vitality Marbles and called Dokgo Hoo again today.

Dokgo Hoo let out his anger at Vulcan as soon as he arrived.

Don't you have friends? Why are you calling me so damn often and unloading your crap at me.

“Uu... I do have one, but because I'm at the Lava Demon Cave still...”

Just how long are you planning on doing grinding for that Vitality whatever? Don't you have enough now? Didn't you say you have enough to clean up Bae Su Jin or whatnot?

“Um... I'm still grinding because I think I have more enemies besides them.”

Having heard Vulcan, Dokgo Hoo shook his head.

Dokgo Hoo always thought Vulcan was a rascal with quite small guts despite the talents he possessed. However, to think that it was this bad...

Frustrated, Dokgo Hoo said,

What a strange fix you are in. Does everyone in Act 2 have badblood with you?

“That's not it, but...”

If that's not the case, stop moping around and just leave this place. If you are that worried, then go exterminate just the Bae Su

Jin and return to Espo City. Rest there for a bit and come back here. Why don't you do that?

Finding Vulcan's insistence on staying at the Lava Demon Cave to be ridiculous, Dokgo Hoo scolded Vulcan with irritated face.

Vulcan had pondering look on his face.

What Dokgo Hoo just said made some sense.

Of course, from safety stand point, leaving after completing 100 years grinding was the best strategy. However, Vulcan currently had enough Vitality Marbles to say he was practically immune to most dangers.

As Dokgo Hoo said, Vulcan could just take a walk outside, eradicate the bastards who revealed themselves and rest for a while by either escaping to Earth or Espo City. Afterwards, Vulcan could come back to the Lava Demon Cave again. Doing all that didn't appear to be so difficult at the moment.

There was no need for Vulcan to endure 100 years at the risk of destroying his mind.

With convinced look on his face, Vulcan asked Dokgo Hoo,

“... Honestly, what I had done so far is enough, right?”



I cannot tell you that. I'm just saying it because I'm so annoyed about hearing you whine. You rascal, I will need to do isolated training at some oddball place for the next 200 years. How long has it been for you here... 40 years? 50 years? Anyway, you are already complaining that you are sick of it... Tsk.

After listening to Dokgo Hoo scolding him, Vulcan had embarrassed look on his face as he scratched the back of his head.

Vulcan had grinded for 50 years. The strength of his will was indeed incredible and more than surpassed common sense. However, it was also true that this was still lacking in comparison to The Six and Dokgo Hoo.

Because of this, whenever he conversed with Dokgo Hoo like this, Vulcan felt like his own shortcomings and laziness became apparent, and that made him want to reflect on himself.

Looking at Dokgo Hoo, Vulcan was about to say that he will stop whining and work hard. However, he shouted after a thought crossed his mind.

“What now? 200 years?”

Watch your tone you little rascal. Why did you yell all of sudden?

“Did you say you will be doing 200 years of training in isolation? Isn't that insane? You are an Enlightened God, so why do you need to do such an extreme training?”

Insane? What's insane! Did you think Enlightened Gods play board games, drink liquors, play around and eat all day? I cannot take this anymore.

Dokgo Hoo muttered that he could not take this anymore. He took a deep breath, calmed his neck and said,

I rose in rank from the lowest battle god to a battle god, but there is no way I would be satisfied with just that. I've heard that a place full of holy energy will be open soon. It had been 1500 years since it was available last time. Only the higher ups like Yur Dong-bin were allowed in there, but it's different this time. Kmhmm. So, I'm going to seize this opportunity. I'm going to train there until I drop, you get it? I'm going to level up a little like you do! I should at least get to a mid-level Enlightened God so I won't get patronized by everyone. I feel so pathetic here. Gosh.

Having heard Dokgo Hoo's words, Vulcan quickly said,

"Huk... That means, for the next 200 years, I will not be able to..."

That's right you rascal! Stop calling me! I keep getting interrupted because of you!

"..."

Dokgo Hoo yelled as soon as Vulcan spoke and interrupted him.

It seemed being called up by Vulcan's Enlightened God Summon so often in random occasions annoyed him a little.

Dokgo Hoo pointed at Vulcan and continued,

... Anyway, because of this, I won't be able to talk to you for a long while, so call someone else.

"Actually, I was bored, so I had called another Enlightened God once. I just got scolded with curses, saying I shouldn't call for no reason."

If that does not work, then try getting along with that demon bastard.

"About that, because of the hidden dungeon's setting, it is not possible, so..."

In that case, try going outside like I said and get some rest before coming back! Anyway, I said enough! I'm going now!

Dokgo Hoo no longer had anything else left to say. With determined look on his face, Dokgo Hoo walked toward Kina Kina's mouth.

Before he disappeared, Dokgo Hoo said one more thing.

You are dead if you call me again before 200 years!

Shoooooc

With that as his last words, he slowly got sucked into Kina Kina's mouth.

Vulcan vacantly stared at the scene. He scratched the back of his head again and muttered,

“Did I call him too many times?”

Certainly, he did call Dokgo Hoo quite often since the 40 years mark.

Vulcan thought that he must have over done it considering how Dokgo Hoo responded.

Vulcan smacked his lips, drew the Strengthened Heavenly Lightning Blade and went back to grinding.

Pazuzuzuzuzut

Kuuuuwwrrrrr

Vulcan's face looked a little motivated than usual.

His movements seemed more energetic than how he was before the conversation with Dokgo Hoo.

Vulcan thought,

‘That’s right... Big Bro is about to do 200 years of training in isolation. The Six said they trained for 1000 to 2000 years. I cannot even handle 50 years? Let’s work hard!’

With refreshed mindset, Vulcan cut down Lava Demons.

Of course, human minds all worked the same. The tightened screws loosened over time, and Vulcan grew lazier over time little by little. However...

This time, he was passionate about the grinding for a lot longer.

He collected Vitality Marbles for 10 years without resting a single day.

It was not like the 50 years before this. He didn’t call Dokgo Hoo in the middle or take a break for day or two. His will power was worthy of applause.

‘Still, this is the limit.’

Vulcan plummeted in middle of the cave.

He closed his eyes and thought,

‘Now, I really am at the limit. I can’t do it anymore. Let’s go outside and take a break before coming back.’

Thinking about incredible training durations of others like Dokgo Hoo, Vulcan had reflected on his own laziness and whipped himself back in to grinding. However...

Even that had reached the limit.

It felt like he could not do it anymore even if it meant getting beat up to death.

Vulcan was that exhausted.

‘I would have thought that the time was still worth it if I leveled up at least, but now... I can’t even gain one level in a year...’

He just could not find a reason to stay here any longer.

He got up and walked toward the boss room.

As Dokgo Hoo said 10 years ago, Vulcan was thinking he should go out for a while, rest quietly and then come back to fill the remaining 40 years.

‘Instead of continuing while enduring the boredom, it would be far more efficient if I came back after resting. As Big Bro said, there won’t be any danger. That’s right. Let’s pause here for now.’

Having thought this far, Vulcan’s stiff face started to relax a little.

He had been forcing himself to do grinding all this time when he didn’t want to. He was always frustrated and uncomfortable. Now, thinking about resting made him feel lighter.

It’s been a while since Vulcan’s steps felt light like this. With excited steps, Vulcan walked the inside of the Lava Demon Cave.

Perhaps because his mindset had changed to a positive tone, Vulcan felt like everything was going to be all right.

It was at that moment.

A SYSTEM notification pierced through Vulcan’s ear.

Ttiiiirng....

[Balroc Balgeram, the Lava Demon Cave’s boss monster, had gained Enlightenment.]

[His transcendence will be soon.]

[Due to absence of the boss monster, the Lava Demon Cave, a hidden dungeon with A level difficulty, will be temporarily sealed after this.]

[For the player who is currently using the dungeon, you can still use the dungeon's content until you leave the dungeon. However, you will not be able to come back in once you leave, so please think carefully.]

“... What? Transcendence? Balgeram has?”

Dumbfounded, Vulcan muttered.



## Chapter 94 - The Mage Swordsman Who Grinded For 100 Years (4)

---

Vulcan opened the SYSTEM window and checked what was just explained.

He could not believe that Balgeram was transcending.

However, there was no way Vulcan would have heard the notification wrong, and there was also no way that the SYSTEM would have delivered him wrong information.

Vulcan confirmed that what was written on the window had what he just heard. Unable to understand this, Vulcan muttered,

“Already? Why?”

Vulcan thought about something.

It was a complaint that Belgeram muttered when it had not even been ten years since Vulcan started his grinding.

Vulcan clearly remembered his Belgeram’s voice, which was full of fury and resentment.

‘Ah. I just needed to hold out for another 250 years. I would have been able to complete the trial without problems and head to the Enlightened world. Just where did this crazy bastard crawl in

from...'

Belgeram was a grand demon from the demon world who held the title of a Duke, yet he was going to the Enlightened World.

That made such a strong impression on Vulcan that he never forgot this despite the fact that it had been 50 years since he heard it.

Because Vulcan remembered this, he could not help but to find it strange to hear the notification saying Belegeram was going to transcend sooner than the original schedule.

'First, I should go to the boss room quickly!'

Vulcan used both the Thunder God's Might and Spirit Form to dash through the dungeon.

Along the way, a few Lava Demons roared and charged at Vulcan. However, using the Lightning Dragon Step just once was enough to put them behind him in the distance, making it impossible for them to catch up to Vulcan's speed, so they were irrelevant.

Like that, almost instantaneously, Vulcan arrived at the repent room.

“ ... ”

However, unlike before, Vulcan felt uneasy about kicking the door open and entering the room.

For some reason, Vulcan was feeling nervous. He gulped big time and opened the door with extreme caution.

Whaaaaaaaaaac

As soon as Vulcan entered, he could feel blindingly bright yet warm light.

Vulcan confirmed the source of the light and lightly opened his mouth.

The one with bulging muscles and violent looking face, the Duke Demon Balgeram.

[Highest Enlightened God Balgeram]

[921 Lv]

‘... This is insane. He is over 920 Lv... I think he might be stronger than me now?’

Belgeram was exuding powerful aura of existence, more powerful than Hellmout who doped himself up to the limit. Belgeram looked

so divine that Vulcan wondered if this really was the same Belgeram he knew.

Vulcan lost his mind for a moment and just stared at Belgeram's appearance.

Vulcan suddenly got a grip and tried to quickly open the door and leave the repent room.

It was because he remembered that Balgeram have animosity toward him.

If it was just a month ago, Vulcan would not have felt threatened by Belgeram no matter what he did. However, now the table was turned.

To beat Balgeram, who was now Highest Enlightened God, Vulcan would have needed to resort to summoning Yur Dong-bin.

‘Absolutely not...! I went through so much trouble to collect those marbles!’

Vulcan was trying to escape before such bad situation unfolded.

However, that didn't happen.

- Vulcan... Is it you?

His voice was benevolent and soft.

However, the voice was powerful in its mysterious way of grabbing attention. Vulcan stopped himself from leaving the room and instead directed his gaze toward Belgeram.

Vulcan saw Balgeram's clear eyes. There, Vulcan realized all of his worries were unnecessary.

‘Those are eyes of someone who has achieved spiritual enlightenment!’

He looked like a monk who achieved enlightenment after realizing the futility of all material things of the world.

Actually, Belgeram looked like a divine being who reached the supreme height. Belgeram looked at Vulcan and said in low voice,

- I'm grateful.

“...?”

- Thanks to you, I was able to shorten the trial by 200 years.

“Just what...?”

Vulcan was about able to understand what Belgeram was saying. Vulcan blurred the end of his sentence as he asked back.

Belgeram smiled big and responded.

- I am saying that I obtained a great enlightenment through your help.

“... What are you talking about. All I had done so far was slicing and dicing...”

It was like doing horrible practical joke and getting praised for it. Like a little kid, Vulcan was stunned and didn't know what to do.

Amused, Belgeram watched Vulcan's reaction. Belgeram soon erased the smile from his face and said with serious look,

- I cannot explain exactly either. I'm no good with words, so... No. I don't think anyone could explain this sensation with words. It is just that... While I was going through trying time while being killed by you endlessly... something went through my head. Afterwards, I just... felt that everything is useless. Life, death, pain, fury, and everything else...

Afterwards, Belgeram muttered things that were incomprehensible even to Vulcan who was aided by the SYSTEM.

With each word, the aura behind him exuded brighter light. It even reached a point where the light was so bright that it was making the stone room look like it was exposed to a daylight.

“Kuk!”

Stunned, Vulcan was staring at Belgeram. Even Vulcan could no longer keep his eyes open properly. The light was that powerful.

In middle of that magnificent storm of light, Belgeram's voice could be heard. The voice felt like it was being delivered to Vulcan through the heart.

- Vulcan... I forgive you.

With that as his last words, along with the light, Belgeram disappeared without a trace.

“ ... ”

Lost for words, Vulcan just stood there at the repent room.

Notification sound could be heard at his ears.

[Barloc Belgeram, the boss monster of Lava Demon Cave, transcended.]

[The boss monster will not be regenerated anymore.]

“Hu... It really did happen. He really transcended.”

Vulcan muttered. He was not able to erase the shocked look on his face.

What he just witnessed was an incredibly rare sight. Vulcan thought he probably won't see something like this ever again even if he lived for another several thousand years.

What he just saw left Vulcan with substantial shock.

All sorts of thoughts were jumbled up in chaos and disrupting his mind. Because of this, Vulcan was not able to come to his senses for a while.

He could not even get a feel for what to handle first.

However, of all the thoughts he had, it was only natural for one of them to stand out, and Vulcan's thought gradually flowed toward in that direction.

“... Was I being a son of a bitch?”

With a calm look on his face, Belgeram said he had went through very trying time. He genuinely forgave Vulcan and left for the Enlightened World.

Thinking about it from philosophical view of life, as Vulcan thought more about it, the things he did to Belgeram felt more and more evil.

‘He kept on getting killed for several decades. The fact that he forgave me is amazing... No. Still, I’m a Player and he is a monster. Is there a reason for me to feel guilty... No. Still, did I go to far...’

Although Belgeram left, he still weighed heavy in a corner of Vulcan's mind. However, Vulcan had another matter that was more important than this. To resolve that matter, Vulcan set aside the thoughts about Belgeram for a moment.



‘... I cannot come back to this place once I leave.’

Because Vulcan was so focused on Belgeram’s transcendence, he was not able to mind this other matter at the moment. However, this other matter was far more important to Vulcan.

The plan that Vulcan had just a moment ago was now riddled with problems.

Vulcan felt like a soldier whose retirement was canceled because a war broke out at his final year. Shocked by the strange twist of fate, Vulcan had a surprised look on his face. He thought for a while.

He was going to go out and take a break and come back.

He was not going to take a long vacation. He was really going to take a short break and come back right away. However, now, Vulcan could not even do that.

‘... Should I just stop this here?’

The thought lingered at his mind for a while. However, Vulcan shook his head hard and eradicated the thought.

Giving up one’s safety just because of boredom...

That was absolutely not acceptable.

‘If I do and end up regretting not having gathered enough Vitality Marbles, then that will be true Hell...’

If the situation led to that, there was only one place where Vulcan could safely gather the marbles. It was the Ancient Gang-shi Factory.

Vulcan imagined what his days would be like to stay there and hunt Poison and Blood Gang-shis.

It was absolutely horrible. It was giving him the creeps.

In the end, Vulcan put a lid on his plan for leaving the cave. Instead, he decided to complete the remaining 40 years straight and then leave.

Of course, just because Vulcan made up his mind, that didn’t mean he could get into it right away.

Instead of getting out of the boss room, Vulcan leaned on the repent room’s wall and muttered in depressed voice,

“... Still, let’s rest for the day.”

Vulcan felt that he needed a day to do some maintenance.

Time passed ceaselessly.

The time could be considered as a brief period for other residents of Act 2. However, to Vulcan, the life inside the Lava Demon Cave felt like the eternity.

Because Vulcan was still young when he was transported to the Rubel Continent, he never experienced the life at the mandatory military service in Korea. Vulcan wondered if this place was similar to the life at the military.

‘No. The mandatory military service is for two years. This is for 100 years. Ugh... Those bastards who complained about the tough life in military were feigning hardship.’

Holding out with such useless thoughts was only for a while.

Ten more years passed, and another ten years passed. When Vulcan was at the 80<sup>th</sup> year, he no longer had any thoughts.

He just killed the Lava Demons in front of his eyes, and he killed them again.

He collected the Vitality Marbles that they dropped. He picked them up again, and then again.

He repeated the same labor he was assigned to like an

emotionless robot. He looked scarier than the monsters.

Like that, Vulcan continued the difficult work that seemed to have no end.

There was no joy in his face. His face was stiff like a wooden doll. However, after several decades, a change occurred on his face.

It was a very small change. Only those with very keen eyes for subtle changes would have noticed this. A very faint smile appeared Vulcan's face.

“ ... ”

As if smile was awkward for him, the tip of his lips struggled to tilt up.

However, it eventually spread to his entire face. Vulcan's whole face was now brightened, and he started to laugh out loud.

“Haha. Hahahaha. Hahahahahahahahaha!”

Vulcan even started to laugh loud enough to flood the entire cave.

He laughed like that for a long while before shouting a few words in even louder voice.

“I completed 100 years! Damn it! It’s over!”

Pazuzuzuzzuk.

Wharururururururuk.

At the same time, Vulcan’s surrounding was engulfed in violent flames and lightnings.

His emotions which piled up for several decades broke out like a burst open dam. Without Vulcan realizing, his mana also exploded out and cast various magic spells.

Guuwaaaaaaaak.

Gyaaaaaaaak.

Having heard the sudden chaotic sounds, two Lava Demons approached Vulcan. However, the difference in strength was like from the ground to the sky.

The bastards got engulfed in the storm of magic and died before being able to put up a proper fight.

Afterwards, their corpses slowly disappeared and coughed out items. Vulcan unconsciously approached them and collected the Vitality Marbles.

“Ah!”

‘Now, I can stop.’

Vulcan quickly came to his senses and tossed the marbles into the inventory as if he was disgusted by the sight.

Vulcan slapped his own cheek and criticized himself. He closed his eyes slowly to think about the difficult past.

‘It really was tough...’

It really was tough. Vulcan could not express it in words.

Including the years Vulcan spent here on the first visit, he spent 125 years inside the Lava Demon Cave.

Vulcan spent  $\frac{3}{4}$  of his life here. He couldn’t even pretend to act tough and say that it was not bad.

In fact, when he was at 95<sup>th</sup> year, he pondered hard about if he should just leave.

The 100 years goal was an arbitrary one. It was not mandatory to fill it.

However, Vulcan chose not to leave.

Vulcan felt desperately anxious that leaving before reaching the goal was like losing to himself. Also, he was concerned about his resolve to endure the hardship that may come after this if he could not persevere in this ordeal.

In addition, having come this far, there was the determination and obsession about seeing through the goal. With all of these emotions combined, Vulcan used them as motivation and secured the goal of 100 years.

Vulcan achieved victory in the fight against himself.

‘Actually, I didn’t gain much here, but...’

Vulcan objectively assessed his own growth.

His level only rose by 34. He was currently at level 855. His Land-fold skill had not improved at all. It seemed he was not good at using Baloc’s Whip either.

Vulcan was the one who was showered with praises as the greatest genius in the history by The Six. Considering this fact, the result he achieved here through the labor could be considered rather modest.

However, Vulcan didn’t care about such.

He seriously didn't mind it.

While enduring the trying times, Vulcan accumulated strong perseverance and patience.

That alone made the time spent here worth it for Vulcan.

Having thought this far, Vulcan quickly moved to get to the front of the Lava Demon Cave's entrance.

"... I'm finally leaving here."

He desperately wanted to leave this place all that time. However, thinking about he was never going to be able to come back here, Vulcan even felt a slight disappointment.

Of course. He was not thinking that seriously.

Vulcan peeked a smile and slowly left the Lava Demon Cave.

Through the 100 years grinding, Vulcan also completed the mental training in the process and became even tougher.

It was the moment of his re-emergence to the Act 2's land.



# Chapter 95 - Unstoppable Force

---

Just like how the Act 1's Main Plaza was booming with people, Espo City's Main Plaza was crowded with people.

There were people looking for comrades to train with and protect each other. There were others who just came back to the city with return scroll and were drenched in blood. There were also others who just arrived at Act 2 for the first time and were looking around to see if there were others of same race as themselves.

Yakumbo and Shakun, a party made of a warrior and a mage, were amongst those people in the Main Plaza.

They were waiting for an elf who was going to go with them to the Forest Area to get rare herbs.

There was still some time left until the meeting time they promised with the elf. To kill the time, Yakumbo said,

“That Fowaru, he seemed to be out of wack?”

“It's been a while since his personality changed. What about it?”

“I'm saying it because he had gotten worse. Today was really...”

Yakumbo cringed big time and talked about what happened earlier.

Having heard what he said, Shakun asked with surprised look,

“Really? I’m finding it hard to believe.”

“Do you think I’m making this up? Why would I? Go to a pub later and ask anyone about him. They are all badmouthing about Fowaru.”

“Still... He was getting weird since 40 to 50 years ago, but to think he had gone that far...”

Shakun was also cringing like Yakumbo. Yakumbo said,

“He is past the point of being just a little weird. Now... I could say he is a completely different person. His personality is that broken. Until now, all I remembered was his kind personality from the past, so I went to see him, and it was totally... It is just too much. I don’t plan to ever go there again.”

“Um... Still, isn’t the potion there the most effective one in the market?”

If it was some trivial item, then that would not have mattered to them. However, when it came to potions, the item was directly affecting their life, so Shakun wished he could continue using Fowaru’s General Store, which sold certified potions.

However, after listening to Yakumbo, he changed his mind.

“Instead of Fowaru’s store, there is a new place, and the rumor has it that this new place is pretty good. The store is run by a high-elf and a god beast. I heard that the potion has superb effect.”

“Ah, really? In that case, before we go to the west islands, it would be a good idea to visit the store...”

Their conversation continued on without interruption.

They were such chatterboxes that they were putting veteran gossipers to shame.

What they were talking about weren’t secrets either, so they were speaking loud enough for people passing by to hear.

So, the man under black robe sitting at a bench nearby, Vulcan, was able to hear their conversations.

After hearing their conversations, Vulcan was swimming in loads of questions.

‘Mr. Fowaru’s... personality has changed?’

It was not like Fowaru was going through chaotic adolescent years from teenage to adulthood.

He was one of the figures in Act 2, and they had average age that went over a thousand years. It was puzzling for Vulcan to hear that someone so old could have a sudden change in personality.

Vulcan could not understand this.

He thought about Fowaru he remembered from 100 years ago when he went to Fowaru's shop to purchase potions.

He had kind smile hanging on his face. Fowaru looked like a good man.

‘... I don't think I'll be able to believe this unless I saw him with my own eyes. Did something happen?’

It was not like Vulcan was very close with Fowaru, but Fowaru was one of very few people who Vulcan knew, so Vulcan was indeed worried.

However, Vulcan had to handle his own business first.

After picking up on the two men's conversation for a little while longer, Vulcan walked away when they started to keep on talking about useless things.

Vulcan was headed to Oracle, the only information organization in Espo City.

\*

As always, Oracle handled Vulcan's inquiry with expediency.

This time, Vulcan requested a lot of information, so instead of a neatly folded piece of paper like the last time, Vulcan left the store with a thick stack of papers.

Of course, in proportion to this, the cost had increased as well. However, Vulcan had enough money to handle it.

He had enough money because Vulcan received cash in addition to all potions from Fowaru's store last time for selling the items to Fowaru. Vulcan's items were worth that much during the transaction.

'To think all that money ended up going down the drain for these... These bastards.... It is no different from a highway robbery.'

Vulcan shook his head and badmouthed about the Oracle. Vulcan went to a room at an inn and started to read the information slowly.

Actually, Vulcan pondered hard about if he should go to Oracle.

He felt that information about himself was leaked a lot more ever since he had been visiting Oracle.

After Vulcan finished the violent battle against Hellmout and returned to Earth, Vulcan wondered about the following throughout the 100-year grinding,

‘How did Bae Su Jin obtain information about me?’

Vulcan could understand how Chimera Maker could. Vulcan ran into the Chimeras that he made many times.

However, it was different with Bae Su Jin.

Vulcan never once ran into anyone who he suspected of being a part of the organization. Vulcan never caused any big stir to make his name known to the entire city either.

Still, the other possibility, which was Chimera Maker selling information about Vulcan to Bae Su Jin, didn’t seem plausible.

In the end, there was only one suspicious party.

It was highly likely that Oracle, the mysterious organization who kept tabs on everything in Act 2, was the one that spread information about Vulcan.

At first, this was just a guess. However, Vulcan was almost certain of this now.

Vulcan was not particularly angry.

From the start, Vulcan was aware that there was not even one bastard in Act 2 that was trustworthy. Adding one more to the long list didn't make him feel disappointed.

However, Vulcan went to the Oracle despite such distrust and ill feeling toward the organization because it no longer mattered to Vulcan if anyone knew of his whereabouts.

‘When it comes to nobodies and small fries, they were no match against me since 100 years ago... Now, I have enough Vitality Marbles to make a mountain, so...’

Vulcan was confident enough to wipe the floor with anyone from Act 2.

He was so certain about this that he thought there was no danger in letting information about him leaking out.

‘It would be a big loss for me instead if I cannot use Oracle because of such a concern.’

So, Vulcan threw away the hesitation and got the information he wanted from the Oracle. Now, the resulting information was steadily piling up in his brain.

‘List of names and power of all bastards who are targeting me, and their locations... These are quite a lot. I thought there would

be many bastards who I don't know about, but I never thought there would be this many...'

There was no need to be surprised about Bae Su Jin and the Chimera Maker who decorated the front page. They obviously belonged there.

However, reading about long list of people in later pages, who he had never seen before, Vulcan almost wanted to sigh because of unlucky and unfortunate life he had in Act 2.

'The ones I got to have positive connections with are... Phantaero, Blue Dragon, Fowaru, Kiba, Toolkas, Elcane... Fuck. I can't think of more people!'

Vulcan had walked the lands of Act 2 for over 100 years, yet his personal networks were in shambles.

His face crumpled on its own.

However, there was nothing he could do when things had ended up the way they did already.

Instead of complaining about this issue, Vulcan focused on reading the list of bastards that he was going to hunt down and give thorough trampling.

"Who is this Chilma... Wow... I think these guys might be pretty strong... Um. Still, are the rest of the list on the average side..."



Vulcan received a lot of information, but as he checked their estimated strengths, he tore off the pages of the ones that he thought was not a threat to him. The thick stack of paper he had grew thinner.

Eventually, Vulcan tore off most of the papers. He scratched his head and thought,

‘Still, compared to the number of bastards on the list, there aren’t that many that I should watch out for. I suppose that’s a good thing... No. I shouldn’t be saying that. I did nothing wrong, yet I had to stay in hiding and grind because I was being hunted like this. Ugh...’

Vulcan eventually checked most of the information. He was looking at the man on the very last page.

Vulcan’s eyes instantly popped.

He was like a shocked person who was not able to get a grip because of an unexpected situation. Unable to lift his gaze off from the paper, Vulcan read the name on the paper.

Vulcan looked infuriated. He raised his hand and brushed his hair back in exaggerated motion. Vulcan ignited fire and turned the last page to dust.

“Fowaru...!”

If Vulcan was to name the one person he was closest to in Asgard, he would be naming Dokgo Hoo. However, Vulcan had established just as good friendship with Jake, the Act 1's merchant.

Fowaru was acknowledged by a man like Jake. Also, Vulcan only had positive experiences with Fowaru, so Vulcan never suspected him. However...

Vulcan went to the bed and plummeted on it.

Lying down on the bed, Vulcan held his forehead with his hand and said in quiet voice,

“... There really isn't anyone I can trust.”

Vulcan didn't think the Oracle would have added false information on purpose. Vulcan was certain now that Oracle was selling information about him at will. However, the Oracle never sold him false information to him before.

Vulcan figured that Oracle just didn't care who it was that they were taking advantage of and will sell information as long as there was money to be made. He thought that Oracle would keep the basic principle as an information organization.

‘... Still.... I don't like the Oracle bastards, but... Dirty bastards...’

Vulcan closed his eyes and organized his thoughts.

Chimera, Bae Su Jin, bunch of nobodies...

In addition, there were Fowaru and Oracle.

There were so many out there who were pestering him. To handle all of them, it looked like Vulcan was going to have to go on a tour.

Vulcan's face was turning red like a volcano that was on the verge of erupting.

“Phew...”

However, Vulcan quickly overcame the shock.

He developed hardened mental strength from 100 years of grinding. It was also because he didn't expect much from Act 2's residents.

In the end, what he had to do didn't change much.

He just needed to repeat the work a few more times.

‘I'm glad that I collected the marbles for 100 years instead of getting out of the dungeon in the middle of the grinding.’

Vulcan had mountain worth of Vitality Marbles in his inventory.

When he left the Lava Demon Cave, he thought he won't end up spending all of the marbles. Now, Vulcan was not certain.

It seemed Vulcan completed organizing his thoughts. With focused look on his face, Vulcan left the inn.

He then glared at the Fowaru's General Store in the distance.

'Well, fine. I don't know what it is that you are trying to gain by targeting me despite the fact that I'm a friend of Jake, but... If you are going to come at me, I'll fight you. I'll chew you off like a ferocious eater.'

Vulcan's eyes gradually fired up in flames.

However, Vulcan didn't go to the store and cause trouble.

Espo City was protected by the Gods.

He couldn't just go in there and destroy Fowaru. This was not the right place for that.

Also, Vulcan was still not completely certain if Oracle was telling him the truth about Fowaru, so there was a bit of hesitation in Vulcan.

So, Vulcan decided to handle Fowaru's case later.

However, if Fowaru tried to sneak up on him, Vulcan was intending on ending Fowaru's life without hesitation.

‘Ah, Of course... You will be next after Bae Su Jin.’

Vulcan moved casually so that he won't draw attention. He walked slowly and left Espo City. He started to move quickly once he reached a place without anyone around.

In the end, his biggest foe was the Bae Su Jin.

Vulcan never forgot about this fact through the past 100 years.

It was making the back of his head itch. It felt like Vulcan was not going to be able to do anything properly unless he went and resolved this matter by ending the bastards.

‘In that case, I'll go destroy you bastards first.’

A battle was going to take place soon.

Actually, what Vulcan had in mind was more of a one-sided slaughter. Running that simulated battle in his head, Vulcan smiled.

The smile was unlike anything Vulcan ever had on his face before. The smile was a merciless one of an executioner.

## Chapter 96 - Unstoppable Force (2)

---

“I knew that the information about me had been spreading, but...”

Vulcan mumbled with dumbfounded face.

He was currently moving in exhilarating speed using Thunder God's Might and Spirit Form, and he could feel the presence of seven people behind him.

They were following him with speed that was on par with his own. Vulcan lightly turned his head to see them and thought,

‘You guys aren't even trying to be discreet about this, are you?’

Vulcan was in extremely foul mood.

He was aware that information about him was being leaked by Oracle. However, he never thought that the information about his current location would be leaked in such a blatantly obvious way to allow annoying flies to come pester him as soon as he left the Espo City.

‘It is almost... like the Oracle is giving the clients the service even before they show up to the office to request the information. Those sons of bitches.’

Vulcan felt that Oracle didn't give a damn about his well-being.

Vulcan figured that Oracle thought this way because they were safe as long as they operated inside the Espo City.

Vulcan disengaged the Sprit Form and slowly reduced his speed. He found a suitable open space and stopped there.

He then injected mana into Kina Kina the beast bird and feed it plenty of Vitality Marbles so he could quickly summon an Enlightened God any time.

“Hurrrrrrr....uk. I think my stomach is going to explode... Kkuuuuk.”

“The extra marbles are advanced payment. I'll be summoning a lot today.”

Kina Kina was acting like it was having a tough time. Vulcan scolded it lightly for feigning difficulties and fixed his gaze toward the direction where the pursuers were approaching from.

Vulcan was feeling extreme resentment toward Oracle, but there was nothing he could do at the moment.

Instead of wasting his mental focus on something that could not be solved at the moment, Vulcan judged that he should solve the situation he was facing right now.



‘Also... Now that I can see them, those bastards were on the list.’

The pursuers were the other bastards that Vulcan was going to eliminate after destroying Bae Su Jin.

Since they came to find Vulcan, that actually saved Vulcan some troubles, so he had no reason to complain about this.

Vulcan looked at the seven beastmen and scanned their abilities.

As he thought, as the Oracle’s information described, they were incredibly tough bastards.

[Tigerian Mu Horang]

[875Lv]

[Tigerian Karirum]

[866Lv]

...

[Tigerian Buton]

[861Lv]

They had extremely high levels.

Vulcan whistled as if he was surprised.

In Act 2, it was rare to see anyone with level 850 or above. It meant these opponents were very powerful beings who were rarely seen even in Act 2.

They would have had the title of Ultra-zenith or above in Act 1.

It was very unusual to see such powerful warriors roaming around in a group, seven of them at once on top of that. However, it was not unheard of.

The Seven Demons...

Of all beastmen in Act 2, this group was the most infamous one.

Most beastmen focused on strengthening of their body's physical abilities. Unlike them, these bastards were unique ones who showed talent in both magic and physical abilities.

One of the bastards opened his mouth.

His level was 875. It seemed he was their leader. He possessed the highest level of the bunch.

“We meet at las...”

“Wait.”

“What? You dare to inturru...”

“Stop.”

“...”

However, his words were interrupted by Vulcan before he even had a chance to finish one whole sentence.

Mu Horang, the Big Brother of the Seven Demons, stared at Vulcan’s face.

The tip of his lips was tilted up slightly.

It was obvious this facial expression was intentional.

Even among the beastmen, Mu Horang was famous for being short-tempered.

Obviously, he could not stand being patronized like this. With infuriated look, Mu Horang was taking a deep breath so he could roar.

However, Vulcan spoke before he did.

Having lost the timing, in awkward stance, Mu Horang ended up being the one who listened instead.

“Before we fight, let me ask you one thing. You guys ran over here after getting the information from the Oracle, right?”

“...”

The seven beastmen fell to silence.

Vulcan looked around them and continued.

“If you don’t want to tell me, then don’t. Even if you keep quiet, I can tell. Seriously, I want to finish Act 2 super fast. I’m so sick of this place.”

Vulcan dropped his head and complained about his fate.

The members of the Seven Demons looked dumbfounded.

Each member of the Seven Demons was considered a top-notch warrior no matter where they went in Act 2. They were absolute powerhouses.

Even Demi-gods could not be careless in front of them.

Because of this, they kept their lives despite having done things as they please for the past 1500 years without a care for anyone else.

‘Yet... he is showing such an attitude in front of us.’

The Seven Demons could not understand why Vulcan was acting this way.

Vulcan’s leisurely attitude should not have been allowed.

He was acting as if the Seven Demons were far below himself. Having noticed this, Mu Horang carefully observed Vulcan.

It was because he wondered if he missed something about Vulcan.

However, from visual inspection of the man, Mu Horang was certain that Vulcan did not possess skills to warrant such confidence.

Mu Horang crumpled his face big time to form a crack between

the eyebrows.

‘He definitely is strong. I would not be certain of victory if I fought him alone in a duel. However... I don’t feel anything overwhelming from him...’

Mu Horang thought about his past.

The Seven Demons were still infamous for being fearless and arrogant, but there was a time in the past where they were excessively so.

It was to the point where their attitude lead to a big trouble for them.

It was about 500 years ago.

Back then, there were eight of them instead of seven. They once met an existence who was like a huge mountain that they could never overcome.

Blue Wind the Blue Dragon...

He was a famous god beast who was known to be the absolute power in the western island. They had a quarrel with the Blue Wind.

In fact, before they fought Blue Wind, they were confident about

their victory.

It was one versus eight. They had the upper hand in numbers.

Also, back then, they had Mu Ranka, their Big Brother at the time.

They believed that they stood a good chance against even a god beast, so instead of swallowing their pride, they chose to fight.

The end result was a one-sided defeat.

The Blue Wind leisurely pushed them off as if he was handling a bunch of little puppies.

The Blue Wind was powerful like a lightning when he attacked, and he was as smooth as clouds when defending.

Against the Blue Wind, who was showing his heavens-above-heavens level of combat prowess, they were utterly powerless, and they had no choice but to just watch the Blue Wind beheading their Big Brother.

‘You dare to show such arrogant attitude in front of me... I’ll end it here this time. However, be careful from now on and stay out of my sight.’

Since that day, the Eight Demons became the Seven Demons, and

Mu Horang learned a critical lesson.

The most powerful beings in Act 2...

Fighting one of them was like fighting a God.

‘... That’s no different from suicide.’

However, this applied only to a handful of great existences in Act 2.

There was no way that this applied to Vulcan, the man who was shaking his head so arrogantly right in front of them.

The fighting spirit felt from Vulcan was substantially different from these great beings as well.

When facing one of these great beings of Act 2, a unique, overwhelming fighting spirit could be felt.

Mu Horang had excruciating experience in the matter in his past, so he could feel that Vulcan’s power was significantly lacking in comparison to such beings.

Mu Horang shouted at Vulcan.

“You runt! Enough with this bluffing!”



“Bluffing?”

“That’s right. I recognize that you are strong. However, it is impossible for you to win against all seven of us. You would be better off resigning to your fate and be subdued quietly.”

“What are you talking about? If I do, what would be the difference at the moment I am subdued? Are you going to drag me somewhere, get money and release me afterwards?”

Vulcan asked back.

As always, the man didn’t even have an ounce of nervousness in him. Irritated, Mu Horang bared his fangs, and Vulcan clicked his tongue and continued.

“It’s fine. I won’t gain anything from talking to you guys any longer. I don’t have time either.”

Vulcan looked at the Seven Demons as if he was sick of them.

He was actually intending to ask them why they were targeting him. However, Vulcan changed his mind.

After all, most of the bastards who were targeting Vulcan were mages. Vulcan was sure that they all had similar goals.

Vulcan also thought it would be a bother to ask each and everyone about their motives when he handle them.

Vulcan thought about Blue Wind the Blue Dragon who must be scratching his full stomach and lying down at the moment. Vulcan smiled lightly.

Vulcan thought maybe Blue Wind will be earning more Vitality Marbles this week than the total sum he earned in the past several hundred years.

‘I think Mr. Blue Wind is going to love it today.’

Vulcan even wondered if Blue Wind will be clearing the Act 2 thanks to all the Vitality Marbles he delivered to Blue Wind. While thinking about it, Vulcan shouted,

“Enlightened God Summon!”

\*

There were six dead bodies.

They each had a large wound on the chest. They all had puzzled looks on their faces.

The blood gushing out from their bodies was flowing in all directions through uneven ground.

In middle of this horrific sight, there was someone who was coughing out blood constantly.

It was Mu Horang, the Seven Demons' Big Brother.

In disbelief, Mu Horang was looking at an existence who stood before him.

“Kulok.... Kuhuup.... How.... Uppp!”

Pwhaaaaaak.

Blood gushed out of his mouth like a waterfall.

Due to his tenacious vitality, Mu Horang didn't lose his life immediately. However, he was in a critical condition. It looked like he was going to depart to the afterlife soon.

Standing in front of him were Vulcan, who still had leisurely look on his face, and the Greatest Battle God Yur Dong-bin, the one responsible for placing Mu Horang in despair.

Mu Horang's eyes were losing their light. They were dying.

His eyes were slowly closing, but Mu Horang forced himself to keep the eyes open and thought,

‘Just how...’

Overwhelming pressure...

The sense of existence felt from the man was even more powerful than the sensation from Blue Wind the Blue Dragon.

Mu Horang took action as soon as this incomprehensible being was summoned, so he didn't lose his life immediately by the strike. However, there was no point in it.

He was currently in a situation where he was already dead.

Mu Horang thought about the blue blade that pierced his body.

‘I never thought something like this would be possible...’

This being could deliver such a powerful attack instantly by crossing the dimension and without any sense of presence.

Mu Horang never thought such a move was possible.

‘This is... not on the Act 2's height. He is closer to being a God... That bastard Vulcan... Just what kind of power does he possess... How could he summon such an incredible being...’

Mu Horang's gaze was fixated on Vulcan. His gaze refused to fall off from the man.

However, that didn't last long.

Soon, Mu Horang lost his life. His head fell toward the ground. Watching this, Yur Dong-bin said to Vulcan,

- For some reason, whenever I come here because you summoned me, I always face these evildoers.

“Is that so.”

- That's right. They were past just being fuel of evil energy. The evil energy was overflowing from these bastards.

“I see.”

‘That's obvious. These bastards were trying to take another man's life for their own gains.’

Inside, Vulcan called them sons of bitches or cows and cursed the ones on the list. He then said to Yur Dong-bin with respectful look on his face,

“This is not the end.”

- Huh? What do you mean?

Yur Dong-bin thought he just finished work.

He was walking toward Kina Kina so he could go back to the Enlightened World. However, Vulcan stopped him and said,

“You will need to demonstrate your strength some more today.”

- Do you still need my power? With your level of strength, there shouldn't be that many in Act 2 who could be a threat to you...

“Due to a circumstance, my situation ended up like this. It will take more power to summon you again, so please just stay in this state and move with me.”

Having heard Vulcan's words, Yur Dong-bin the Blade God said with a stern face,

- I understand. Although you summoned me through the Blue Wind's power, since you paid the price for it, I'll do as you asked. However, my blades won't be swung unless we are facing extremely wretched bastards. As I said earlier, an Enlightened God's mission is to save and guide the people of the world.

As if he was trying to say that there was no need to worry about this, Vulcan said with confidence,

“You won't have to worry about that. They are all incredibly treacherous bastards.”

\*

It was at the office of Madorugi, the Commander of Oracle.

Usually, the man had a few dozen papers floating in the air and worked diligently. Unlike his usual, he just had a large screen floating in front of him, and he was drinking a beer.

On the hand that was not holding the beer, the situation here was that he even had a chicken drumstick.

It was obvious he was enjoying whatever was happening on the screen.

“Hm... Finally, the Seven Demons arrived. There should be a prelude scene before Vulcan goes to Bae Su Jin.”

Madorugi was watching the screen with intrigued look on his face.

Leisurely look on Vulcan's face was being transmitted with clear visual.

Watching the man's face, Madorugi tilted his head to the side.

‘He is too relaxed... Did something happen in the past 100 years?’

During the violent collision between Vulcan and Helmout, Madorugi didn't have a surveillance magic cast on him at the time, so he learned about the incident afterwards.

So, he didn't know how Vulcan defeated Helmout. However, Madorugi believed that it could not have been easy.

However, looking at Vulcan's utter lack of nervousness despite facing the Seven Demons, Madorugi was certain that Vulcan had

an incredible move.

Madorugi looked even more intrigued and leaned forward as if he was going to get sucked into the screen.

‘It worked out really well... If he didn’t come to visit the Oracle again, I would have completely forgotten about this bastard.’

Madorugi was more interested in watching others fight than anyone in Act 2.

He would have been really pissed and not be able to sleep for days if he missed out on this fight again because he didn’t use the surveillance magic and learn about it afterwards.

He chugged on the beer and got a big bite out of the chicken drumstick. He focused on the screen to watch the fight that was about to happen.

Five minutes passed.

Madorugi had his jaw dropped. He was petrified like a stone statue.



# Chapter 97 - Unstoppable Force (3)

---

The battle was already over.

Actually, Madorugi wondered if what he just witnessed could be called a battle.

It was a one-sided slaughter from one side. After the battle, Vulcan and the mysterious being headed somewhere else. Madorugi was at a loss for words.

For a moment, he couldn't even move. He just stared at the screen. He then suddenly got a grip and muttered,

“This is unbelievable.”

That's all he could say.

The power demonstrated was way beyond what he expected.

It was so powerful that Madorugi was doubting the being that Vulcan summoned. Madorugi could not help but to panic.

‘I'm this surprised and I'm not even at the scene. I wonder what the Seven Demons thought as they died. They were probably beyond shocked. They probably thought this was impossible.’

Madorugi broke in to hollow laughter.

He could not understand it no matter how hard he thought about it.

The one who appeared to have been summoned by Vulcan...

The man was semi-transparent. It seemed that he was an Enlightened God from the Enlightened World who was summoned here. It appeared that the man was strong enough to be compared to the most powerful beings of Act 2.

‘How did Vulcan summon someone so powerful? Actually, it should be impossible for a Player to summon an Enlightened God in the first place. Did he acquire some fantastic artifact from the hidden dungeon?’

Modorugi had no way of knowing.

He knew a lot about Act 2. However, even he had no way of knowing where Vulcan’s power came from.

Madorugi peeked a smile.

It was not a hollow laughter like the earlier. He was smiling because he was genuinely entertained.

He thought,

‘I think this will be more fun than I thought.’

A Player who had been in Act 2 for only 150 years asked about the location of Bae Su Jin and ran straight to the place after getting the information. Madorugi thought this man must be insane.

No matter how rapid his growth was, there had to be a limit. Madorugi considered the upper limit of this scenario, and even with that, he concluded that it would be too much for an individual to fight and win against an organization called Bae Su Jin.

Therefore, Madorugi was only interested in seeing how far Vulcan would put up a good fight. He never wondered who would be the final victor at the end.

From the start, he thought the outcome was obvious.

‘However... If he can continue to use a power like this, no, if he could use it during the battle against Bae Su Jin at least...’

Madorugi thought the scenes far more entertaining than what he initially expected would be produced.

Having thought this far, he chugged on the beer he had on his hand and sent an additional information to Bae Su Jin.

The message read that Vulcan was in possession of incredible power and he was headed to where Bae Su Jin was, so they should

be prepared.

Initially, Madorugi thought Vulcan was definitely an underdog, so he was not planning on giving Bae Su Jin more information unless they requested it. However...

‘If Vulcan’s surprise attack succeeds like this, I think it will end too one-sidedly.’

Madorugi didn’t want it to end like that.

Madorugi instinctively knew that this battle will be a spectacularly entertaining one.

He wondered if he would be watching the recorded video of this over and over for the next one hundred years.

He looked like he could not hold still from anticipation and excitement.

“Ah, right. Bae Su Jin will need time. What could be done to buy them some time...”

Madorugi looked up the ceiling and thought about ways to buy Bae Su Jin some time.

It seemed he thought of a solution. He nodded twice and quickly used telecommunication magic to send Vulcan’s current location

to many others.

They were all interested in Vulcan since a long time ago.

However, over the course of 100 years, they had been losing interest.

‘Since Vulcan killed the Seven Demons with ease... These ones won’t be able to do much other than being minor hurdles, but that should still be enough.’

Having thought this far, he got another bottle of bear and directed his gaze back to the screen.

There was nothing else he could do.

Now, he was just an audience of a broadcast. All he had left to do was witnessing amazing spectacles that were about to happen.

“Who would win... I don’t care who wins. I just hope it doesn’t end too quickly.”

Madorugi’s quiet mutter filled the office.

\*

“I finally found you! You had been hiding around for over 100

years...”

Suuugrrrrrk.

“Kuuurrrrrrk! How... Such power in just 100 years... This is impossible...!”

“I grow pretty fast. Farewell.”

Kwaaaang!

“Uuuuaaaaaak!”

First, a group of ten mages called Masters of Korun Scholars showed up.

Their existences in this world were swept away by the Lightning Arts of Yur Dong-bin the Greatest Battle God of level 999.

“You bastard. Although we don’t have any grudge against you, become the nourishment for the sake of our growth.”

Pshuuuuuk

Phu phu phu phuk.

“Kuuhuuurrrrk!”

“Kuuloc, huuloc!”

“Just who... is that...”

“He is a great one who is close to me. Now die.”

Kwaaaaang!

”Kuuuurrrrrk!”

Second, a group of six mages who named themselves as Dark Wave came.

It only took one swing.

They were swept away by one blade swing from Yur Dong-bin.

This was not the end.

More mages came to hunt Vulcan.

They were all on the list that Vulcan had. Also, they were all extremely evil. Each and every one of them would have felt wronged if someone did not acknowledge them as the most evil one in the Act 2.

They were the broken ones who lost their humanity after being trapped behind walls that they could not overcome for over a thousand years.

They were desperate. It was like trying to grab on to dead grass when someone was on the verge of falling from a cliff. They rushed into capture a rare species named Vulcan and lost their lives after facing a calamity named Yur Dong-bin.

As the battles went on, the amount of Vitality Marbles that Vulcan had decreased naturally.

They were not as powerful as the Seven Demons that Vulcan faced in the beginning. However, each of these groups were powerful. It would have been difficult for Vulcan to handle them by himself. So far, not just one, but three such groups showed up to hunt down Vulcan.

However, it didn't matter.

Vulcan had substantial amount of Vitality Marbles still sleeping in his inventory.

Also, the marbles he spent so far were not wasted. Vulcan was planning on finding and eradicating all of these groups after eliminating Bae Su Jin.

Vulcan thought that the current situation was actually better.



‘This is actually better. It would have been a bother to wander around to find them all. Instead, they are all coming to find me on their own, so... My work just became a lot easier.’

The list was getting shorter, and that brightened Vulcan’s face.

Having thought this far, Vulcan approached the pile of corpses.

They all lost their lives by Yur Dong-bin’s blade.

Vulcan searched the dead bodies and took all sorts of items. Watching Vulcan do this, Yur Dong-bin was dumbfounded. He said,

- You rascal. You are stealing the belongings from the dead. You call yourself a human being!

“I’m not a human being. I’m a Demi-god.”

- If you are a Demi-god, then you have even more reason to not do this! Just what are you thinking!

Yur Dong-bin scolded Vulcan harshly.

However, Vulcan had something to say in response.

Vulcan looked like he was feeling that he was wronged. Vulcan

said,

“I have done nothing wrong, yet these bastards want to kill me. Such treacherous bastards are all over the Act 2 like sands. To survive, I need to do everything I can, don’t you think?”

- You rascal... Still... Uuuuu.

Having heard what Vulcan said, Yur Dong-bin cringed big time. As if he was giving up, he tossed the following words.

- You are one strange one just like the Blue Wind.

“Nowadays, I sometimes think that my personality has broken down a lot.”

He was telling the truth.

A normal human being would be spending most of his time living a normal life while forming normal relationships with people. Instead, Vulcan had been spending most of his life in blood splattering battles and training in isolation.

It was impossible for Vulcan to form a normal personality.

The environment itself was too horrible.

Vulcan looked up the sky and thought,

‘That’s right. This is not my fault. The world turned me into this.’

Vulcan haphazardly completed self justification and said to Yur Dong-bin,

“Anyhow, let’s hurry. We killed almost all of the ultra strong bastards, so you can just sit back for now until the battle against the ones called Bae Su Jin.”

- I see, but there’s another one coming this way.

“... I see.”

- Since you said I could sit this one out, you handle it this time.

Tadak.

“Just what are you guys chatting about? What’s that? He looks like a ghost... Is he an Enlightened God?”

“It’s just one person.”

Vulcan mumbled.

The tone contained the attitude that doubted this one's ability to handle the two of them.

The man figured this out as if he was a ghost with a supernatural sense. Yum Chyul-sang, a Hell Demon Force, exploded in fury.

“You bastard! You had been playing around at the Lava Field at best, yet you are patronizing me! I am...”

The man went on and on in verbosely detailed speech about himself.

However, neither Yur Dong-bin or Vulcan were interested in what the man had to say.

“Level 831 Yum Chyul-sang... This guy is not on the list... Did he come here after hearing a rumor about me?”

- That man... Perhaps he is suffering from energy circulation disorder. He is not normal. Evil energy has penetrated all the way down to his bones. He is not an evildoer, but I think it would be better to send him away.

“ ... ”

“You bastards! Were you not heeding my words!”

Thinking that he was being ignored, Yum Chyul-sang was

infuriated.

Watching the man, Vulcan sighed big and slowly drew his blade.

Pazuzuzuzut.

“Wh.....at!”

The man was feeling the power of Vulcan’s golden lightning which was combined with the power of the Duke Demon Set armor.

Feeling the overwhelming intensity, Yum Chul-sang slowly stepped back. However, the situation had already gone past the point of no return.

Kwakwakwakwakwang!

“Kuuuuaaaaak!”

His scream echoed to the far distance. Vulcan and Yur Dong-bin again hurried toward the main base of Bae Su Jin.

\*

“Finally, we are here.”

- So, is this the place?

“Yes. Ugh. Many enemies showed up, so it caused more delay.”

Vulcan thought the Oracle must have spread information about Vulcan’s current location in real time. Most of the ones he was planning on eliminating showed up to block their path.

In the end, they all perished.

Now, on the list, there were just Bae Su Jin, Chimera Maker, and Fowaru.

‘I was going to eliminate Bae Su Jin first, but somehow, I ended up doing that near the end.’

Vulcan felt that the current situation was like a video game.

It was like clearing stages one after the other to progress to the boss stage.

‘It’s probably because I have this being next to me named Yur Dong-bin, who is floating in the air while riding a blade. Despite everything, I am not getting nervous at all.’

Vulcan was not feeling any sense of danger, so it seemed that was the reason why such useless thoughts were coming to his mind.

Vulcan opened the inventory and checked the amount of Vitality Marbles left.

There were still countless number of them. It was to the point where Vulcan could not see the end of the marbles. They were rolling around in abundance inside the inventory.

Vulcan felt confidence surging through his body. He used float magic to get up in the air and checked the Bae Su Jin's main base.

It was a dome-like structure.

Vulcan heard that there were about 200 members of Bae Su Jin. Considering the number of members, the building was quite large.

The structure looked like a turtle shell. It looked sturdy like a fortress.

‘As I thought... There are too many uncertainties, making it too risky for me to eliminate them all by myself.’

Vulcan didn't know how many defensive measures were set in place inside of that building.

He also didn't know what kind of bizarre methods the bastard named Rex Ruburo was going to use to threaten him.

Vulcan could not accurately assess Bae Su Jin's total combat

strength.

Of course, with a card named Yur Dong-bin on his hand, Vulcan was not too concerned by such.

‘It does not matter what kind of cards you guys hold. I’m holding Royal Straight Flush.’

Vulcan looked at Yur Dong-bin and said in confident voice,

“Well then, let’s go.”

- Hold on. Wait.

It seemed something was bothering Yur Dong-bin. He just stayed at where he was with displeased look on his face.

Watching Yur Dong-bin, Vulcan had puzzled look on his face.

“What is it? Is there a problem...?”

- So, you cannot feel it?

Yur Dong-bin was looking straight at him.

His eyes were saying someone of Vulcan’s height should be able to notice this.



It had been a while since Vulcan felt like a pupil who was being scolded by a teacher. He flinched inside and carefully observed the main base of Bae Su Jin.

Vulcan strained his eyes and opened up all of his senses.

Vulcan focused his mind like that for a while, and he showed shocked response.

“This is... Incredible.”

- That's right. It looks like you finally felt it too.

Yur Dong-bin nodded. He had a look on his face that said Vulcan should have noticed right away. Vulcan looked at his stern and serious face. As if he was creeped out, Vulcan said,

“Unbelievable amount of mana... Despite that, they hid it well. If I entered their base carelessly... I would have sustained serious damage.”

-That's right. This base is perfectly prepared to fight us. Even I would suffer substantial damage if I entered the place without any preparation.

“Does that mean you could enter the place without much resistance if you make preparations?”

Anxious, Vulcan asked.

More resistance along the path to infiltrating deep into Bae Su Jin's base meant Yur Dong-bin had to exert more of his power, and that was going to result in more expense with Vitality Marbles. From Vulcan's perspective, this was a loss.

So, Vulcan hoped Yur Dong-bin would say, 'yes, I could go in there with ease.'

However, Yur Dong-bin said something that was a little different from what Vulcan was thinking.

- No. There is no need to go in.

Kuhum...

Yur Dong-bin the Blade God calmed his neck and added,

- Let's just end it from here.

# Chapter 98 - Unstoppable Force (4)

---

“Pardon? From here? How?”

Dumbfounded, Vulcan asked back.

What Yur Dong-bin was suggesting was defying common sense. Vulcan thought it was impossible.

Vulcan looked at the Bae Su Jin’s main base again.

He then checked the distance from his current location to the target.

‘... It is really far.’

Vulcan thought there was no way to do it, even for Yur Dong-bin.

Vulcan was well aware that Yur Dong-bin was strong.

He probably possessed astonishing power, enough to defeat any challengers from Act 2.

However, Yur Dong-bin was a master swordsman. Ultimately, he was not a mage.

He was the kind who could demonstrate greater power in close

distance, not from a long distance like this.

So, Vulcan thought it would be difficult for Yur Dong-bin to deal significant damage from such a far distance.

‘Is he bluffing?’

Vulcan looked at Yur Dong-bin’s face.

The man’s face was unwavering just like how it was when Vulcan first summoned him.

Vulcan thought Yur Dong-bin would not make a joke or say something he didn’t really thought was possible.

Yur Dong-bin said,

- It is possible. It will take a long time and a lot of power, but... I think it would be better to do it this way. Instead of mounting a frontal assault against the enemy base that is fully prepared to fight us, don’t you think this would be better?

Vulcan just stared at Yur Dong-bin in silence.

Vulcan nodded and stepped back to go stand just behind Yur Dong-bin.

Yur Dong-bin was a swordsman with level 999. Yur Dong-bin was at a far greater height than Vulcan, and he was suggesting that this was the better way. Vulcan did not feel any reason to object to it.

Vulcan just needed to sit back and watch Yur Dong-bin at work while eating a cake.

‘Still... I wish he didn’t spend too much of the Vitality Marbles.’

Vulcan felt a great loss every time the Vitality Marbles were spent because he collected them through blood and sweat.

He earned them so he could spend them. However, he collected them through excruciating process over a very long time, yet the marbles were being spent in matter of days. It was hard for Vulcan to not feel a great sense of loss while watching the marbles being spent so quickly.

Vulcan could not say this out loud, so he said it again inside,

‘Blade God... Please spend your power efficiently.’

Vulcan looked at Yur Dong-bin. He was diligently preparing for something.

Meanwhile, Yur Dong-bin didn’t seem to care if he was being stared at or not. He just closed his eyes and focused his mind.

For a long while, Yur Dong-bn the Blade God was like a tranquil water. He suddenly opened his eyes big and threw his blade to the sky.

In exhilarating speed, his treasured sword crossed the sky without making any sound.

The blade reached the height where it was too far up in the sky for anyone to even notice it, and Yur Dong-bin's powerful internal energy started to accumulate around the blade.

Woooooong

At the same time, Vitality Marbles were sucked into Kina Kina the beast bird's mouth in fearsome rate.

Watching this, Vulcan closed his eyes and thought,

‘Let's just empty my mind.’

\*

“I don't like this.”

Rex Ruburo, the Commander of Bae Su Jin, was tapping at the desk.

He was cringing big time. It was as if he was taking a walk and suddenly had invisible spider web tangled up on his face.

Anyone could tell that he was feeling extremely uncomfortable.

To not fan his anger, the members of Bae Su Jin all tended to their stations and worked hard.

Thanks to that, Bae Su Jin was perfectly prepared for the battle against the enemy who going to arrive soon.

“I don’t like this.”

However, it was not like being prepared was going to be enough to make him feel better.

Rex wondered if he should go grab a random mage and let out his anger. However, he thought it would be a bad idea to worsen the atmosphere to a more violent mood before the big battle, so he folded his idea.

Instead, he talked to Marake, one of bosses of the Bae Su Jin and also his blood brother.

“That bastard... When did you say he will be arriving?”

“He is probably almost here. I heard that he will be here within one hour even if it takes a long time.”

“That’s what the bastards from Oracles said?”

“Yes. They said they are certain.”

“Tsk. Helmout died after trusting those bastards’ words.”

“...”

Rex Ruburo, his big brother, was putting it in such a way. Marake didn’t think he could say anything in response to counter his opinion.

Marake kept his silence.

Like that, a moment passed. In the end, Rex Ruburo was not able to suppress the anger boiling inside. He roared.

“Do your work right you bastards! He is going to be here soon! Didn’t you hear it! Everyone keep on drinking potions and pour in mana into the mana tank! Got it? You guys won’t be of much help during the fight, so at least draw mana!”

His words were very insulting.

However, nobody was able to talk back at him.



All members of Bae Su Jin were grand mages. Each of them was a talent that may or may not be born in an entire dimension. However, now that they ended up in Bae Su Jin, a place that was regarded as the sewer of Act 2, there was no way that these mages would have had any pride left in them.

Instead, to them, the magic knowledge or research results that were occasionally shared by the Commander or bosses were several tens of thousands of times more important.

Of course, the fact that they were afraid of their commander was a significant factor.

“Damn it!”

Kwang!

Rex Ruburo kicked the desk. Unable to stand still, he walked around the area. He then sat down at the chair again and tapped at the desk again.

He was letting his nervousness shown in plain sight.

Watching this, Marake sighed inside.

‘... Was hunting Vulcan a bad move from the start.’

Vulcan the Player.

Marake never thought Vulcan would prove to be such a powerful opponent and stand before them like this. If he knew, then he would have never got involved with the idea of hunting Vulcan.

While thinking about this, Marake soon shook his head and denied the thought.

‘It is not like we knew this was going to happen.’

Nobody could have thought that things would turn out like this.

After all, Vulcan was just some bastard who had been running around the Lava Field, which wasn't a high-level hunting ground to begin with. However, it turned out the man was an incredibly powerful one who slaughtered Helmout and seven other members of Bae Su Jin in a battle. As if that was not ridiculous enough, now, after 100 years, Vulcan possessed the power that rivaled the most powerful beings in Act 2.

It was such an unbelievable story that Marake thought he would not have believed it even if he traveled back in time to tell himself this.

However, such a ridiculous thing did happen. Now, Bae Su Jin was in danger.

The area near his eyes were shaking due to anxiety. Marake brushed the side around the eyes and thought about the

information that came in from Oracle.

‘Vulcan the Player is currently approaching the Bae Su Jin’s main base. His target is the main base. His combat potential is at least on par with the most powerful beings of Act 2. It is also possible that his power is on par with the Blue Dragon of the west island. Advising prompt preparations.’

Marake would have yelled at the source to not feed them with bullshit if this message came from someone other than Oracle.

However, Oracle had been demonstrating 99% or greater accuracy in information. He couldn’t just dismiss their information as garbage now. Instead, the Bae Su Jin base was under emergency red alert.

Rex Ruburo gathered everyone to the base, not just the members who were in the vicinity, but even the other members who were in far away places.

About two hundred mages gathered at the base, and Rex Ruburo ordered them to fill the mana tank.

Using the mana cannon that they created, he was planning on destroying Vulcan in one shot before he entered the base.

‘If he really is at the height of Blue Dragon, then we will definitely face defeat if we fought him head on! Pull your mana out! We have plenty of potions, so keep on drinking and fill the

mana tank!’

Rex Ruburo’s eyes were red like a bull. He continued to whip the members with his words.

The members of Bae Su Jin were well aware that running away was pointless. They knew that they would be hunted down individually and killed by Vulcan if they ran. Because of this, they poured in mana to the tank as if their lives depended on it, and Bae Su Jin was able to accumulate mana in incredible pace.

It would have been no exaggeration to say the mages themselves were made into powders and put in the mana tank.

As result of this, they were able to pour in astonishing amount of mana in the tank before Vulcan arrived. They could not be certain about its power, but they felt that the amount gathered was enough to deal damage to even a god.

Of course, Rex Ruburo was not the kind of man who would be satisfied with just this, so he ordered half of the mages to continue injecting the tank with mana while the other half focused on keeping the mana hidden.

Watching all this at work, Marake thought,

‘No matter how strong that bastard is... It won’t be easy for him to withstand this.’

If this was a head-on battle against the Blue Dragon, Bae Su Jin had no way of winning even with 200 mages. Excluding Rex Ruburo and the bosses, the mages' average levels couldn't even reach the Lava Field.

The difference in abilities were too great, so it was accurate to say that the number of mages meant nothing.

The battle would have been like a wolf in middle of a herd of lambs.

Actually, Marake thought it would be more like an onslaught by a lion.

‘However... No matter how powerful the opponent is, if 200 mages had enough time to gather mana and prepare...’

He thought that would be a different story.

He assessed that the fire power gathered by Bae Su Jin at the moment, which was willing to go to the extreme in desperation, would be enough to kill even the Blue Dragon if he was hit preemptively.

Of course, this was just his guess.

It was a naïve thought by someone who had never faced anyone as powerful as the Blue Dragon.

Anyway, Marake never doubted the mana cannon's power. Instead, he started to worry about something else.

He was worried that Vulcan might run off after noticing the large energy signature of mana.

‘We had it disguised pretty well, but... If he notices it somehow and dodges it, then we will be trapped in here!’

Vulcan had reached the height that was on par with even the strongest of Act 2. Marake thought that fighting Vulcan outside was a ridiculous idea.

If things went wrong like he predicted, it would have put Bae Su Jin at a great disadvantage.

So, Marake desperately hoped that Vulcan would approach the base without hesitation.

Marake hoped that Vulcan would be blinded by his own power and let his guard down.

He hoped that Vulcan would die quietly by the power of the preemptive strike that contained the mana from 200 mages of Bae Su Jin.

He desperately hoped for this outcome.

However, it turned out that Marake worried for nothing.

“... Fuck.”

Rex Ruburo cursed.

Looking at the stiff look on the man's face, Marake wondered what happened, so he walked toward Rex Ruburo to ask him a question.

However, after a brief moment, Marake also realized why Rex Ruburo dropped the f-bomb.

Just like Rex Ruburo, with petrified face, Marake also focused his gaze at the surveillance monitor for the sky.

He noticed a dot. It was exuding blindingly bright blue light, and the dot was slowly getting bigger.

Soon, Marake realized that it was not a dot but a blade containing humungous power. He stuttered in panic.

Other members of Bae Su Jin were reacting the same.

They all just vacantly stared at the screen like doomed people who were petrified to see a nuclear warhead coming down from the sky.

Not even one of them could snap out of it.

Of course, except Rex Ruburo, the Commander of Bae Su Jin.

“Switch the mana cannon to mana shield. Hurry! Do you all want to croak?”

The mages got a grip after hearing the man’s frantic shouting. They all tumbled and quickly switched the mana toward the fortress’s defense system.

Owing to the man’s quick thinking, the fortress was able to form a sturdy shield before the blade came down to strike them.

The blade came from a great height, so they had a bit of time to prepare.

However, that didn’t mean the Bae Su Jin was out of danger.

It was more accurate to say that their troubles just started.

The blade of blue light gradually grew in its fierce intensity as it came closer to the fortress.

It seemed energy blade technique was compressed to the blade by several hundred folds. The blade was surrounded by terrifying power.



Absolutely terrifying pressure could be felt just from looking at the blade, and it collided with the Bae Su Jin's defense system. After that...

CHUURRRRRRRRRRRRRRRNG!

Sharp, destructive sound, loud enough to vaporize the ear drums, exploded from the collision.

The shield was cracking as if it was going to break down immediately. Looking at the shield, Rex Ruburo shouted loudly,

“Don't spare any mana! If we don't stop this, we are all dead!”

He rolled up the sleeves and started to pour in his own mana into the tank.

Thick sweat drops fell from the man's face.

His face was shaking. Rex Ruburo thought,

‘This is inconceivable!’

To avoid a disaster like this, he tried his best to avoid bastards who he thought might be too much to handle.

He thought he had been doing well so far by staying below a suitable limit. However, just one erroneous decision lead to this predicament.

He thought about when he received the information about Vulcan for the very first time.

A mutant Player. The first Player ever to arrive in the Act 2.

A complete newbie who still has the protective blessing. No alliances. A bastard who roams around alone. Rex Ruburo thought about how overjoyed he was to hear about Vulcan.

The risk was close to null, yet the value as a research material was unbelievable. Rex Ruburo could not just let this one pass.

It could be said Rex Ruburo made an obvious decision.

Yet...

‘That small fry... It had only been 150 years. To think that he would grow so much!’

Rex regretted his decision from that day.

He wished he could go back in time and slap the hell out of himself.

However, there was no way to turn all this back.

He threw away useless thoughts and poured in everything he had into the defense system.

His life was at stake.

It was not the right time for him to get his mind all tangled up with thoughts about what happened in the past.

\*

- Phew... Those bastards are extremely well prepared for defense. It had been several hundred years since I had to exert this much.

“ ... ”

- Um? Why are you standing like that?

Yur Dong-bin the Blade God tossed out the comment casually as if he just returned from taking a stroll around a mountain. Meanwhile, Vulcan was absolutely shocked. It was difficult for him to even open his mouth. He barely managed to open his mouth and said...

# Chapter 99 - Over a Mountain and Yet Another Mountain

---

“Well... How did you do it?”

- Weren't you watching? It was telekinetic blade technique.

“It was different from the telekinetic blade technique I have seen before...”

Vulcan thought about the duel against Ho-gwang at Act 1, which was a long time ago.

The telekinetic blade technique that the bastard used back then would have been impressive enough for people of the lower dimension to be shocked from witnessing. However, the destructive power that Yur Dong-bin just demonstrated made Vulcan think it shouldn't even belong in the same class of technique.

Yur Dong-bin said,

- I can't always bring about such power at any time. It was possible only because I had a long time to focus my power. There is no way to use this during a real battle.

Yur Dong-bin talked about it as if it was no big deal.

Vulcan looked at the calm look on the man and slowly directed gaze to the back.

Bae Su Jin used to have a turtle shell like structure.

The powerful, dorm shaped structure sunk to the ground as if it was hit by a bomb.

That was not all.

A huge crater, five kilometers in size, was formed around the fortress.

Baffled by the power of the technique, Vulcan shook his head left and right.

Asgard's land was incredibly sturdy because of the protection by the gods, so it was difficult to damage it.

However, Yur Dong-bin's move completely reshaped the scenery in the area. Vulcan felt like a nobody while standing next to Yur Dong-bin.

‘On top of that, he did it from such a great distance... I wonder what kind of mastery level in internal energy would it take to perform something like this...’

Still shocked, Vulcan kept looking at the fortress and Bae Su Jin.

Looking at Vulcan, Yur Dong-bin said,

- It is not over. Let's go wrap it up quickly.

“... Pardon?”

Vulcan floated question marks on his eyes. Yur Dong-bin added,

- I was going to end it in one move, but their defense was very strong. I broke their barrier and dealt direct damage to the structure, but that was the end of it. Well... It appears they exhausted all of their power to neutralize my telekinetic blade technique, so they are probably completely spent. You should be able to handle them all by yourself.

“I see.”

Vulcan looked at the Bae Su Jin's fortress again.

Only the ground below their fortress was spared from the destruction. The surroundings formed a deep crater, but the center, where the fortress was, had a tall pillar like land mass still left just below the fortress.

Vulcan focused his eyesight and observed the fortress. He could see a few mages crawling out of the rubbles and struggling to attempt escapes.

Vulcan's eyes caught on flames.

'I cannot let a single one of them survive!'

These bastards were the ones who were most responsible for the hardship that Vulcan had to endure for the past 100 years.

He could not forgive them.

Vulcan raised up the Thunder God's Might, drew his blade and charged in toward the rubbles.

Before long, he even engaged the lightning spirit form.

He was moving so fast that his body appeared to be stretching out.

Watching this, Yur Dong-bin mumbled,

-Looks like he had a lot built up inside.

It was obvious. Bae Su Jin was going to kidnap Vulcan and perform human experiments on him.

Yur Dong-bin grabbed his treasured sword that just returned. He casually tossed it to the air.

Afterwards, he lightly jumped and got on the sword.

Shoooooooooc

In leisurely speed, Yur Dong-bin flew toward the fortress.

With the stern face as usual, he watched Vulcan terminating the mages of Bae Su Jin.

Yur Dong-bin thought there was no need for him to rush over to the site.

Even from the distance, he could feel the mages' evil aura. He was certain that these mages were treacherous.

So, there was no need for him to stop Vulcan. Also, it didn't look like Vulcan needed his help either.

Mages were all completely exhausted. They were faltering around.

There was no need for Yur Dong-bin to lift a finger.

Like that, Yur Dong-bin leisurely continued his flight while standing on the blade. However, the look on his face suddenly hardened.



- This is...

He turned to look around the building in disarray with rubbles all over the place.

Something was agitating his senses.

Yur Dong-bin showed sharp eyes to determine where it was coming from.

‘Just what is this...’

It was beyond simple villainy. Yur Dong-bin felt something of absolute pure evil that was about to happen to defy the heavens. He put up a serious look on his face.

He thought he was not able to stop this because he took his time getting here.

However, there was no way to turn back what had already happened.

Instead of regrets, he focused his mind and realized abhorrent stench coming from numerous mages.

He got to Bae Su Jin’s fortress as quickly as he could.

Shaaaaaaaaaak

Yur Dong-bin's hand was moving at a fearsome speed. It was as if the space itself was erased by his move. Blue light surrounded his hand and brought out a blade that shined with blindingly powerful blue light.

It was burning with unstoppable intensity to destroy all evil.

The blade pierced toward the being who was standing behind a large rubble.

Kwaaaaaang!

\*

“Kuuuuaaak!”

“You son of a bit..... Kuhuuk!”

Vulcan arrived at the base in an instant.

He quickly disengaged the spirit form and raised his Heavenly Lightning Blade to chop off the mages who were still stunned.

There was not much resistance.

To start with, the difference in strength between most mages and Vulcan was too great. Also, most mages were completely depleted of their mana. They would have had difficult time to form even a simple Hellfire.

A few mages shot magic at Vulcan's back in attempt to ambush him. However, Vulcan made examples out of them by killing them in even flashier methods, and such attempts stopped.

Eventually, nobody was crawling out of rubbles, so Vulcan now had to search and destroy them.

Kwadudududk.

“Kurrrrhuk... Ku. Khuk!”

“So long.”

Surguk....

One bastard had 822 level. Vulcan figured this one might be one of the bosses. He drew the bastard out of the ground and chopped off his head.

Vulcan was going find another one and feed his blade to him. However, he realized this was inefficient.

‘... Should I just focus my energy like Yur Dong-bin and explode it at once?’

Of course, it was not going to be as powerful as the move by Yur Dong-bin, who was at level 999. Still, instead of searching and killing the mages one at a time, Vulcan thought it might be better to maximize the Thunder God Blade and strike it to the ground from the sky.

“All right.”

Having made up his mind, he used magic and went up to the sky.

Vulcan started to pour in his mana and Demi-god power into the Strengthened Heavenly Lightning Blade.

Pazuzuzuzuzut

The Thunder God Blade grew to incredible size.

The sight of it conjured up fear in mages who were in hiding. Some tried to quickly break out of the rubbles and escape, but they became dust after being struck by the Destructive Cores that were formed from Vulcan’s hands.

Gulp...

After seeing it all, the mages couldn’t do anything. They had no

choice but to stay in the rubbles and watch the Thunder God Blade's size grow.

‘Shit!’

Rex Ruburo was one of such mages.

Through a crack in the rubbles, he took a quick glance at Vulcan who was glowing in golden light and then spewed out curses.

Fortunately, they were able to stop the blow that was almost as powerful as an attack by a god. However, that first attack could not be the end. As he expected, Vulcan the bastard charged in immediately afterwards and started to slaughter his subordinates.

‘Well, I don't care about them dying, but...’

The problem was that he had no way of escape.

The original plan was to recuperate some of his mana and escape while Vulcan was busy fighting other mages. Now, Vulcan was going to wipe the floor with a big move instead, so that plan was no longer an option.

Rex Ruburo was shaking as if he was suffering from a seizure.

He was too infuriated and frustrated about the situation.

‘Ku... So, that’s the only option left...’

Rex rolled his brain to think if there was a way to escape the current predicament safely.

However, there couldn’t be such a way.

In the end, he reached the conclusion that he had to use an incredibly dangerous method. He scratched his head hard enough to cause bleeding and sent telepathic message to his blood brother.

- Little Brother.

- Yes, Big Brother.

- I am sorry.

- Pardon? What are... Khuuuuuk.

That was the final conversation between Rex Ruburo and Marake.

Marake lost consciousness after feeling sudden pain behind his back. Like that, he rapidly lost his vitality.

As if he was under some ancient curse, he dried up completely like a mummy.

All life was sucked out of him, every last drop of it. Marake was not able to regain his consciousness. He became a corpse.

He was not the only one.

There were about a hundred other mages who were still alive. They all started to bring their hands behind their neck in pain and lost consciousness. In the end, they all lost their lives after having their energies drawn from them.

Energies from one hundred high level mages...

In an instant, they were absorbed by Rex Ruburo's body, which swelled up into muscular form like a body builder.

Afterwards, powerful lights could be seen in the man's eyes.

He was beyond comparison to what he was only a moment ago. Rex shook his body.

“Huuuuu...”

He screamed in pain. He absorbed huge amount of energy that was beyond his ability. His body was not able to handle it.

Rex Ruburo could be considered the most powerful human, but even he was having a difficult time. The power he absorbed was

that huge.

There was going to be unavoidable side effects after this as results of attempting something so beyond his capacity, but there was no other way.

Rex thought about the move that destroyed the fortress's defense system.

Thinking about it, he thought that he would not stand a chance unless he took a risk as great as this.

There was no time to stand behind safety margins.

This was why Rex chose to absorb the strength from even Marake, his blood brother.

‘It’s good that I marked all of the members when they joined.’

The marks were placed to keep the members in line and use them in a pinch. However, Rex never thought the day would come where he had to resort to this utterly reckless method.

However, having come this far, he had no other way.

Rex Ruburo's gaze headed toward Vulcan.



It seemed Vulcan also noticed Rex's amplified power. Vulcan looked very shocked.

Rex breathed roughly and gathered strength at his feet so he could charge at Vulcan.

However, Yur Dong-bin was a step faster.

Kwaaaang!

“Kuuuuuk!”

Rex Ruburo crumpled his face like a demon from hell as he got thrown off to the distance.

He overexerted himself to force his body to come to a stop and locked his gaze upon the man who just struck him.

The man had long grown beard. He was a semi-transparent existence who wielded a blade that exuded blue light.

It seemed seeing the man solved a question that Rex had. He said,

“I see. I do not know how you did it, but you were borrowing the power of an Enlightened God. Not just anyone, but the Greatest Battle God...”

He looked at Vulcan and turned his gaze to Yur Dong-bin.

There was a stark difference in the powers felt from their existences.

Rex figured it must be Yur Dong-bin who destroyed his fortress in a single blow.

The man smiled.

‘It might be hard to beat that Enlightened God bastard, but... If it is Vulcan, I think I can handle that? Once I end Vulcan, doesn’t that mean that deadly bastard will go back to the Enlightened World as well? I think this is doable?’

As if he found a breakthrough the falling sky, Rex smiled big.

He thought he didn’t even stand 20% chance of surviving this, but now, it felt like he stood over 50% chance.

‘I need to hurry... Before the power leaves my body, I need to kill Vulcan and go to recuperate my body. All right... I can do this. Let’s go!’

Rex Ruburo brainwashed himself to inject confidence.

Meanwhile, Yur Dong-bin was looking at the man with displeased eyes. With infuriated look on his face, Yur Dong-bin

said to Vulcan,

- His evil knows no bound... Without hesitation, he is defying the heavens directly with his treacherous ways. I must eradicate him right this instant for the betterment of this world!

“As I told you before, these guys are seriously rotten.”

Vulcan responded with a casual look on his face.

However, unlike his appearance, Vulcan was actually quite anxious.

It could not be helped.

Vulcan checked Rex's level through the SYSTEM.

It was astonishing. It defied common sense.

[Enhanced Human Mage Rex Ruburo]

[871Lv(+150)]

‘... With those numbers combined, that's over 1000. Isn't this dangerous?’

Vulcan always thought that a four-digit level belonged to only the

Gods.

The level that Rex currently had was not his true strength, but he still temporarily achieved that height through malevolent ways regardless. Vulcan was screaming inside.

It seemed Yur Dong-bin noticed this.

He said to Vulcan,

- Don't be frightened.

“... Pardon?”

- I said do not be frightened. At a glance, he may look powerful, but it is all falsehood. If the world's greatest sword was given to a child, do you think the kid would be able to wield it to its full potential? I shall defeat him myself.

With that, Yur Dong-bin took a step forward and stood in front of Vulcan to protect him.

Looking at Yur Dong-bin's semi-transparent body from the back, Vulcan could feel a great sense of security.

It felt like he just took a step into a strong castle.

Vulcan had a faint smile on his lips.

‘That’s probably true... The sudden change in level is over 100. Does that mean there will be a difference in the caliber that cannot be covered by simple increase in stats?’

Vulcan was not at Yur Dong-bin’s height, so he was not able to know for certain. However, just from the look on his face, it looked like Yur Dong-bin was capable of winning this battle.

However, Vulcan couldn’t just relax and watch.

It was Yur Dong-bin who was able to fight Rex, not Vulcan.

If that bulging muscle bastard ignored Yur Dong-bin and charged in after Vulcan, then that was going to lead to a very difficult situation.

‘Of course. If Yur Dong-bin defeats that bastard in a single strike, then that won’t happen...’

It seemed that was not the case.

Through Yur Dong-bin’s semi-transparent body, Vulcan looked at Rex Ruburo and agonized over this.

‘Is this going to be all right?’

Should I runaway, far away from here? Until the battle is over?’

Vulcan shook his head.

There was a more certain way.

‘I’m not going to like it, but... I still have plenty to spare, so...’

Vulcan opened the inventory and feed a huge amount of Vitality Marbles to Kina Kina the beast bird.

Kina Kina was panicking and screaming as if it was fearing its stomach might burst from eating so much marbles. Vulcan looked at the beast bird with pity in his eyes.

Vulcan said in a quiet voice,

“Enlightened God Summon.”

# Chapter 100 - Over a Mountain and Yet Another Mountain (2)

---

As if he was trying to protect Vulcan, Yur Dong-bin was standing in front of him with a blade in his hand.

Watching the man, Rex Ruburo was not liking the situation.

‘Damn it. With him standing in the way like that, it will be hard to target that bastard.’

Rex wanted to target only Vulcan while ignoring Yur Dong-bin.

However, it seemed that was not going to be possible.

Rex gritted his teeth hard enough to crack them and focused mana in both of his hands.

It was because Rex thought being in a stand-off like this without doing anything was going to just put himself at a disadvantage.

‘Longer this drags on, I’ll be the one who is going to be put at a disadvantage... I have no other options. I need to fight that Enlightened God and cut off Vulcan’s head when I get the chance!’

Rex adjusted his plan. He shouted loudly and raised his right hand, which had a huge amount of mana focused on it, toward Yur Dong-bin.

It was at that moment.

Kwaaaang!

“What is this!”

There was a sudden sound of explosion, and that made Rex’s gaze to shake.

Not letting this opportunity go to waste, Yur Dong-bin charged toward Rex in lightning-like speed.

His blade of blue light was thrust toward Rex like a long spear. Rex panicked and shot mana cannon.

Kuuuuung

The ray of light was shot toward Yur Dong-bin at a speed that couldn’t even be recognized.

The cannon’s power was beyond Rex’s wildest imagination. However, it was still not enough to deal damage to Yur Dong-bin.

His blade was swung in just as fast as the ray of light. Rex’s mana cannon was blocked by Yur Dong-bin’s blade.



Yur Dong-bin snorted and charged in right away. Rex broke cold sweat and cast various magic to prepare to parry Yur Dong-bin's attack.

‘What was that noise just now. That was... Is Vulcan up to something?’

Before the battle started, there was a large sound of explosion.

In the area, other than Rex himself, there were just the Enlightened God and Vulcan.

Since he had his gaze fixated on the Enlightened God, he concluded that the explosion must have been caused by Vulcan.

‘What is he up to?’

Anxiousness started to pile up inside Rex's mind.

He was fighting an opponent that was difficult to handle, yet he couldn't stand his curiosity about what Vulcan was doing.

In the end, he was not able to keep his curiosity in check. He glanced at Vulcan's direction.

Rex was certain that this deadly Enlightened God bastard was going to not let this opportunity slip by and close in the distance, but he just had to look.

So, Rex took a look, and he saw another being.

He was wearing thick metal armor around his entire body. He was holding a gigantic tower shield. The man was a 2.20 meter tall giant.

The semi-transparent being made Rex think of a tough castle wall. Rex cursed out loud,

“Fuck!”

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck...

Rex couldn't help but to swear.

He was so frustrated and infuriated that he could not stand it.

He was already fighting an Enlightened God who could neutralize all of his magic attacks with just a sword. Rex already was not confident about beating him.

The plan was to hold on, find a gap and then escape.

Rex was thinking just one opportunity was going to be enough, just one opportunity to end Vulcan, the one who summoned these beings.

That was the only hope Rex had. He was withstanding this monstrous bastard's attacks because of this one reason.

‘Another Enlightened God... On top of that... That bastard is also not below me...’

Rex Ruburo lost all hope.

Even at a glance, the newly summoned being looked like he was a master of defense. He had powerful and tough body and heavy armor.

Also, the man seemed like he was not going to let his guard down even for a single moment. With cold eyes, the man was glaring at Rex in full alertness.

There was no way that Rex's ambush attack was going to work.

Feeling desperate and hopeless, Rex lost all will to fight.

Naturally, his focus in battle also became dull. His tightly packed web of magic attacks started to loosen. Yur Dong-bin was able to fight Rex with greater ease.

For a moment, Yur Dong-bin stopped advancing toward Rex. Instead, he focused his mind.

Deadly energy started to focus at where Rex was standing.

Rex got a grip and quickly used magic to fly up to the sky.

Kuuuuung

A blue blade appeared at where Rex's heart was just a moment ago.

The blade appeared with powerful light with intense heat before disappearing. After watching the blade, Rex felt the chill going down his spine.

Having realized that the move ended in failure, Yur Dong-bin clicked his tongue. Feeling his heart beating like hammers, Rex focused all of his attention at Yur Dong-bin once again.

However, Rex was well aware.

Even if he focused until his brain burned to crisp, even if he raised his power to 120% of his potential, Rex was not going to be able to survive this danger.

The tide of victory was already in Vulcan's favor. Rex had no choice but to accept the certain defeat that was going to come.

‘Ugh... What a shitty life.’

As the first human being in the history, Rex Ruburo wanted to clear the Act 2 somehow and obtain the honor of rising to the ranks of godhood.

He wanted to be showered with all human being's respect and fear. However, it all went wrong.

Just because of one man.

A complete greenhorn who could not even set foot in Act 2 only 150 years ago.

“Kuuuuaaaaa!”

Rex roared loudly, enough to make the surrounding echo with his voice.

About one hundred photon spears appeared around him. Each spear was about the size of a fist. However, each of these photon spears rivaled the most powerful spells of high level mages in Act 2. Powerful mana could be felt from the spears.

Uuulkuk....

Blood came out of Rex's mouth like a fountain.

He was using mana well beyond his capability, so his body was not able to take it.

However, Rex didn't care at all about the condition of his body. He continued to inject mana.

He threw away his hope of survival a while ago.

He recognized that the battle will end with his defeat no matter how much he struggled. He figured he might as well go out swinging, so he was using a huge amount of mana that was difficult to handle.

It seemed Yur Dong-bin also felt that this move was different from magic attacks so far. With serious look on his face, Yur Dong-bin prepared for the attacks that were about to pour out from Rex.

Yur Dong-bin was aware that this next move was the final attack that this bastard generated by squeezing out all of his life.

'Does this mean the battle will be over after I stop the next attack.'

Yur Dong-bin was welcoming this.

Instead of fighting a drawn out battle against an opponent who only focused on defense, it was going to be cleaner to end the duel with a single move.

More powerful energy exuded from Yur Dong-bin's blade. Like

that, a moment passed.

Rex Ruburo's super move was finally complete.

Although he never allowed a single strike on his body so far, the man was in shambles.

Rex Ruburo, the Commander of Base Su Jin, smiled violently.

His blood soaked teeth were shaking. His hair was waving in the air in disarray. He looked horrifying like a demon. Rex raised his hand toward Yur Dong-bin.

Papapapapat!

In an instant, the hundred photon spears surrounded Yur Dong-bin.

Afterwards, one hundred mana cannons exploded out with ferocious intensity to melt away everything.

It was so blindingly bright that it was difficult to watch. A storm of light violently engulfed where Yur Dong-bin stood.

Ziiiiiiiiiiiiing...

The power of mana cannons was incredible.

It was like a laser gun from a science fiction movie. The mana cannons were demonstrating powerful light and melting the land away.

Actually, it was more accurate to say the cannon beams were erasing the land masses.

In comparison to other magic spells, the mana cannons from the photon spears were accompanied by relatively quieter noise. Meanwhile, the beams created deep craters that seemed to be endless in depth. It created a terrifying atmosphere of a bizarre kind.

However, the look on Vulcan's face didn't change.

It seemed he was not nervous at all.

The look on him was too emotionless to assume that it was all because he had strong faith in Yur Dong-bin. Looking at Vulcan's face, Highest Enlightened God Vilhelum Phon said,

- What a vulgar hobby.

“What do you mean?”

With a casual look on his face, Vulcan responded to his question.



Vulcan looked like he had absolutely no idea what he was talking about. Vilhelum Phon shook his head.

- That man stood no chance of winning, yet he gathered up all of his power for his final attack so he won't have any regrets. Enlightened God Yur Dong-bin also agreed to face him in his final attack to decide the battle in a single clash. That man is the worst kind of evil. I hope another one like him won't appear in this world again. However... To meddle in the final duel like this...

He didn't finish his sentence.

Still, he clearly delivered his message, which was that he didn't like Vulcan's decision.

Vulcan looked a little frustrated. He looked at Vilhelum Phon, the Enlightened God who was protecting his front.

[Highest Enlightened God Vilhelum Phon]

[973Lv]

‘He is talking like a knight. Does that mean people who are not related to Murim can become Enlightened Gods? Actually, anyone who beats Act 1 can go to the Enlightened World, so it probably does not matter.’

To begin with, even the great demon Balgeram became an

Enlightened God. If he could, then anyone could.

Vulcan was thinking about something that was completely unrelated to the question that Vilhelum asked. Vulcan turned his gaze toward Rex Ruburo.

Rex was gushing blood from his mouth like a waterfall. Blood veins were bulging on his forehead. He was still operating huge amount of mana.

He looked desperate. He even looked pitiful. However, Vulcan didn't think so at all.

Thinking about the 100 year grinding inside the Lava Demon Cave made Vulcan feel like the blood in his body was flowing the wrong way.

So, instead, watching Rex making futile efforts made Vulcan feel better the longer he watched.

Vulcan smiled and said,

“If I didn't cancel the summoning... Enlightened God Yur Dongbin would have had to withstand that powerful magic. If that happened, then the amount of power spent would have been too great. I am not summoning by myself. I'm borrowing the power from the Blue Dragon in exchange for Vitality Marbles, so... I should conserve the marbles when I can. I will need help from Enlightened Gods later.”

Vulcan was talking like a calculating merchant. Vilhelum Phon looked like he was finding this unacceptable.

‘It seems like this man does not know honor. Well, Blue Dragon is like that too. How could he act like that when he is supposed to be a Great God Beast?’

Vilhelum Phon criticized both Vulcan and the Blue Dragon, thinking the same kind of people made deals with each other.

- I see. Anyway, it appears to be over.

“Yes. It was extremely powerful. He continued such powerful magic for several dozen seconds...”

Vulcan looked at the land that was swept away by Rex Ruburo’s magic.

It was as if the land was dug by a large drill. The hole was wide and deep. It appeared to be bottomless like an abyss in hell. Shocked by the damage, Vulcan said,

“I think that bastard must be completely out of his mind. He poured out such ridiculous amount of mana without even realizing that Enlightened God Yur Dong-bin disappeared...”

‘Wasn’t that your intent?’

Vilhelum Phon politely criticized Vulcan only in his mind and walked to where Rex was.

It looked like a lump of iron was moving.

Watching Vilhelum Phon, Vulcan also followed him.

Of course, Vulcan didn't let his guard down.

Rex was on the verge of death. However, against Rex, letting his guard down for even a moment could mean death.

On his knees, with hollow eyes, Rex was looking at Vulcan and Vilhelum Phon.

His white robe had turned red a long time ago because of all the blood from his mouth. Also, the robe was soiled and torn from the battle.

Overall, Rex was in shambles. He looked pathetic.

Rex said,

“Kukkuk... They say over a mountain and yet another mountain... I just defeated a master of blade who I never thought I could win against, yet another impossible challenge arrived before me... This time... I won't be able to avoid death...”

‘I am sorry, but you didn’t win.’

Vulcan was thinking he should tell Rex the truth. However, Vilhelum Phon glanced at Vulcan. It seemed like he didn’t want Vulcan to tell Rex that, so Vulcan decided not to.

Instead, Vulcan said something else that he had in his mind for a long time.

“You must be sick of me, but I am sick of you too, you Bae Su Jin bastards.”

“...”

“Still, it looks like there are roughly 200 corpses here. That’s great. Everyone was gathered here, so that made my job a little easier.”

“... Hurry up and finish this. I’m tired.”

“I see. I was going to anyway.”

Vulcan looked at Vilhelum Phon and nodded.

He also faced Vulcan and gestured to indicate that he understood. Vilhelum Phon raised his gigantic mace to the sky.

It looked so violent that Vulcan wondered if just being grazed by the weapon would result in death.

- Pay for your sins with your death.

It was like an executioner's words. The mace fell toward the Rex's head.

Rex closed his eyes and quietly accepted his death. It looked like everything was going to end.

However, the situation was flowing in a direction that was a little different from Vulcan's expectations.

Shoooooooooc

"...?"

Vilhelum Phon suddenly disappeared.

Vulcan was watching him smashing his mace, but he was now suddenly gone. Surprised, Vulcan looked around.

However, he could not find Vilhelum Phon anywhere.

‘What the, why all of the sudden?’